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HORSES, JOCKEYS AND CROOKS



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THE AUTHOR

HORSES, JOCKEYS & CROOKS

Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Racing

by
ARTHUR J. SARL

"Larry Lynx" of "The People"

A Foreword

BY THE RIGHT HON.
THE EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G.

With 19 Illustrations

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TO MY FRIEND
JAMES BUTLER,
OF THE *DAILY HERALD*
WHO HAS FORGOTTEN MORE
ABOUT BOXING THAN I SHALL
EVER KNOW ABOUT RACING

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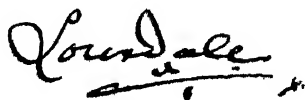
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FOREWORD

BY THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G.

I HAVE been asked by the author to write a few words of goodwill towards this book, which I gladly consent to do. I am sure the book will be of great interest to all concerned and connected with Racing and to others who I hope will read it. The author has had so much experience in all the various lines of sport which he describes in his own style, that I am certain his readers will not only derive much pleasure and enjoyment from his book, but will also realise when reading his descriptions, the pleasures and pains he must have experienced himself.

LOWTHER,
PENRITH.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lonsdale", with a horizontal line underneath and a small flourish at the end.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

I CAN hardly call these pages a chronicle of events in my thirty years' experience of the Turf. For this reason : With the exception of the first few lines of the opening chapter of the book they are not in the order in which they happened. More or less they have been jotted down at random during the period I have acted as Racing Correspondent of *The People*, and I am gratefully indebted to the Proprietors and Editor for permitting me to elaborate much of the material contributed by me to that newspaper.

In telling of a life that has been crammed with excitement I must emphasise that it has not been my desire to hurt anybody's feelings. My straight-from-the-shoulder comments on controversial matters of public interest appertaining to the great and glorious sport of Racing should be taken therefore in the same spirit as what my readers may term those "idle thoughts of an idle fellow."

If that is done I can salve my conscience, as I know that on the "balance of my form" I have not been an "idle fellow." Sporting journalism precludes any such diversion.

ARTHUR J. SARL.

KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES

HORSES, JOCKEYS AND CROOKS

CHAPTER I

WORCESTER FOR A START—ON "NECK OR NOTHING" BACKERS—
SOME KEMPTON PARK HISTORY—A FORGOTTEN £33,000 WAGER
—OLD-TIME RACE-COURSES

I SUPPOSE I had better begin at the beginning. I started to go racing at a very early age. It was about the time I was being taught to take nourishment from a feeding-bottle. The place was Worcester, that cathedral city where everybody does what they should and nothing they shouldn't.

First let me tell you that I had a nurse. My nurse also had a young man. Don't imagine I am blaming her for that. Lots of nurses have young men. My nurse's young man wasn't a policeman—at least I don't think he was, but he was a follower of that noble animal the horse. He liked a day's racing, and, being an affable and thoughtful young man, he occasionally took his sweetheart with him in a sort of joint enterprise which had for its main objective the picking up of a few stray shillings to buy bits and pieces for the home. As his affianced bride could not go without me I was pushed in my perambulator to the Pitchcroft, which is still Worcester's race-course, and, I suppose, the business of "making a bit" started with the first race.

All might have gone swimmingly if my nurse's young man had not found a few winners. As it was, the couple were so engrossed in backing their fancies that they forgot me.

It was only after racing had finished, and most of the crowd had departed, that a friendly gate-keeper

saw my "pram" standing in splendid isolation on the far side of the course near the rails.

On further investigation he found me. My nurse, *avec* young man, had left for England, home and—liquid refreshment. That's the worst of absent-minded folk, they are "a one."

Still, all was well on the farm, and in the perambulator. My nurse did not even lose her job, for she came running back helter-skelter, tears in her eyes, with a heart as big as a melon. She was just in time to stop me from being handed over to the police.

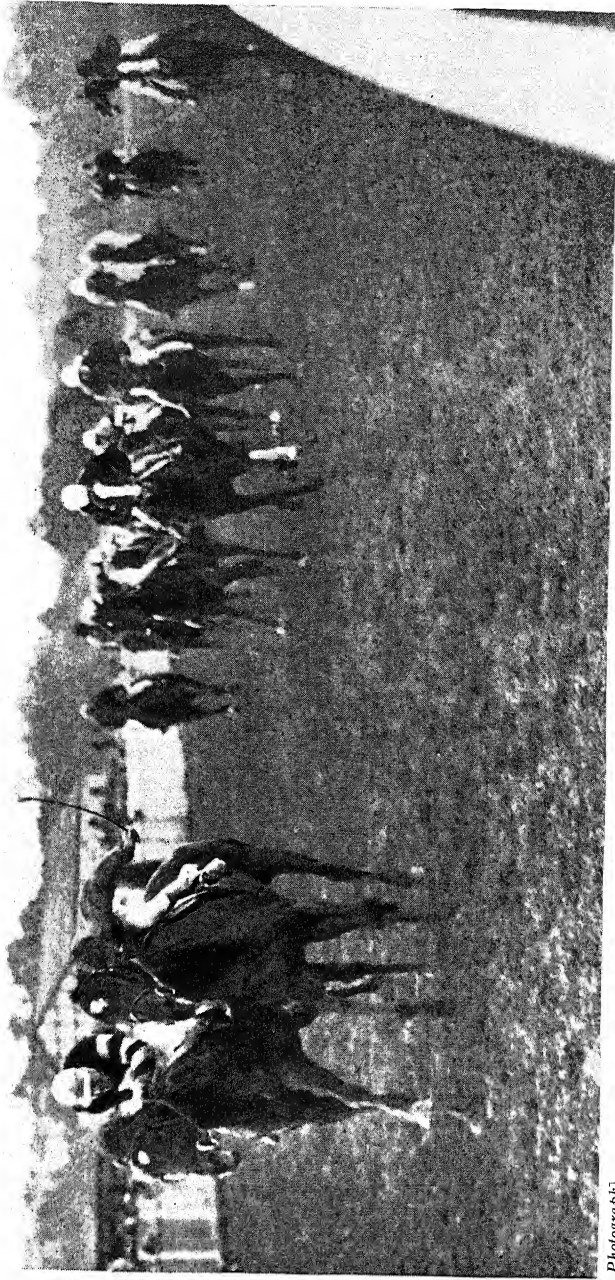
Of course, remembering the incident of my first visit to the Pitchcroft, it is not surprising that I have a sneaking regard for Worcester sauce.

It was at Worcester, by the way, where I started to exploit my first system. I had been told that if I could get a bookmaker to accept a wager of five shillings on the first winner, any to come ten shillings on the second winner, with the additional proviso of a pound double on the first two winners, I should make a stack of money.

The bookmaker whom I asked looked at me with a discerning eye. Then he looked at his clerk. Seeing that I was dead serious he said, without even having the common decency to remove his cigar while talking : "What's the —— lark? P'raps you'll name your —— horses."

Racing as a sport is the greatest sport in the world, but it should be taken at all times as a tonic, not as a medicine. Some people own horses purely for what they think they may be able to get out of them. In this way the horse becomes a machine and the owner a gambler. When the horse does not win there is chagrin in the camp.

Now, I do think that those fortunate folk who are in a position to race for the fun of the thing get far more enjoyment out of life. It does not matter to them whether they lose or win. Betting is a secondary consideration. Much of the pleasure is gained in looking over their horses in the paddock and paying



Photograph

[Sport and General

A FINISH ON THE PITCHCROFT AT WORCESTER
Time Keeper (M. Hunter up) wins the Riverside Nursery Handicap.

an occasional visit to their training quarters in order to witness the work done on the home gallops.

It is all for the good of racing that many enthusiastic followers of the "Sport of Kings" view things in this light. I am sure that those who only bet according to their means start the week in a much happier frame of mind than the neck-or-nothing "punters" who spend many precious hours wondering what they must do in order to get square on a "sticky" week. I can speak feelingly myself, for there was a time when I habitually lost more money at racing than I could afford. I don't do it now. I am not voicing the sentiments of a reformed rake. I cannot say that I regret having betted beyond my means, for, all things considered, it taught me a lesson. I don't imagine I shall ever do it again.

When misfortune comes to the inveterate gambler, as it generally does, he blames his luck from force of habit, and, unless he is a horse lover, he will feel inclined to heartily curse the animal which has let him down.

What he ought to do is to blame himself for his own crass stupidity. It is not the fault of the horse. Most horses try to do their best. It is only when they get in the hands of unscrupulous people that they repeatedly give in-and-out running.

In racing, the inner workings of the game are so amazing that many things can be, and are, misinterpreted. You can back a succession of ten or twenty losers, and you can back a succession of as many winners. That is what makes the sport so fascinating to the man in the street.

A hundred years ago backers of horses were cudgelling their brains in order to find a system which would assure financial success. Thousands of punters are doing this to-day, and they will go on until the end of the world. Why anybody should think that a sport which is largely based on chance is a sure road to El Dorado beats me, but it is so.

I was in my early teens when the late Lord Rosebery's Ladas won the Derby. I knew no more about

horses than an Eskimo knows about India, and I did not even know where Epsom was until I had walked the whole way from Clapham to the "town of salts," having played truant from school.

That little episode did not start me on the gambler's road, for about all the money I had in my pocket amounted to something under a shilling. However, what it did do was to teach me that racing was a wonderfully exciting sport.

I began to study horses, devoured all the racing books of records I could lay my hands upon. I memorised the Derby winners back to the day the great race was founded by an ancestor of the owner of Hyperion, and I could rattle off the placed horses like a "Datas." Years after I started to write about racing, and became a "regular."

I made a point of visiting every race-course within handy reach of London, and every year I used to take in a few new tracks, until in the course of time I found there were not many places I did not know. Even the smaller race-tracks came within my compass, Monmouth, Pershore, Glamorgan Hunt (near Cowbridge), Market Rasen, Wye, Hawthorn Hill, Plumpton and the like.

I suppose every racing man has his favourite course. Mine is Kempton Park. It is not because it has been a particularly lucky venue that I write in praise of the name. Like others, I have had my good and bad days there. On one occasion I backed ten horses in the "Jubilee" and not one of them was in the first three. That would be the year Sirenia won. But I made up for that awful lack of judgment by backing the winner of the Duke of York Handicap (it was then called "Stakes") five years in succession. I won—for me—a tidy "packet" on Orpheus, who had finished third in the Derby.

Still, it is not merely pleasant memories that make me a Kempton "fan." It must be something more than that.

Once upon a time I took a house near the paddock

gates. I thought it would be nice to have a race-track on my doorstep. I moved in about November. The Christmas meeting at Kempton Park was abandoned as there was six inches of snow on the course. As the clerk of the weather also put the damper on the next meeting—fog, if I recollect aright—I packed up my traps and moved. It wasn't good enough to be on top of a race-course and see no racing.

Kempton has not had the luck of the devil. Before they built the present stands a fire razed the members' stand and other buildings to the ground, but the course is now the most up-to-date in the country.

Bendigo established the fame of the Jubilee Handicap. Victor Wild and Ypsilanti did more, and the war was the cause of a little horse called Arion winning the substitute "Jubilee" at Hurst Park, for troops had occupied the Kempton track during hostilities, and they continued to occupy it after peace had been declared. Hence the race had to be transferred "across the river."

As a matter of history, Kempton Park was started on July 18, 1878. The first event decided over the Sunbury pastures was a 250 sovs. affair called the Inauguration Plate. There were fifteen starters, including that good horse The Mandarin, destined, when bought into Captain Machell's stable, to win the Esher Stakes and the Royal Hunt Cup. The Mandarin was beaten a neck by Dunkenny, ridden by George Fordham, and owned by Mr. F. Gretton, who achieved notoriety he possibly didn't desire when he booked £33,000 to £1000 about Isonomy for the Cambridgeshire, and, after the horse had won, failed to remember the name of the bookmaker with whom he had made the bet.

The bet was taken at the old Oxford music-hall, a noted rendezvous for sportsmen, but the owner of Isonomy never drew his money.

Many years after I had the pleasure of seeing the silver cup presented by the Kempton management to the trainer of Dunkenny. It was reposing on John

Porter's side-board at Kingsclere. John Porter was the man who trained many Derby winners, including the mighty Ormonde, Blue Gown and Flying Fox.

Before Kempton was started "gate-money" meetings were by no means popular. The powers that be were dead against the idea. If the late Admiral Rous could have prevented what he termed "capitalists exploiting English racing," he would have done so. The idea of a £1000 stake made the old fellow go all of a dither. He averred that it would mean "Scum and scoundrelism at the expense of order and decency." The first real gate-money meeting was, I believe, Sandown Park.

Time had proved that the "gate-money" meetings have always been conducted in a more orderly manner than the so-called "open" meetings. I remember Harpenden, I have a vague recollection of Stockbridge, and I went twice to the old course at Northampton, where I saw Evasit win the "Stakes."

Harpenden, which usually clashed with the final day of Chester, was a terrible race-track. The "boys" made it one of their happy hunting-grounds, and you could judge yourself fortunate if you came off the course without being "breeched." Northampton, in many respects, was not much better in the days when the "Birmingham mob" were a terror in the land.

Sandown and Kempton did a lot towards altering this state of things for suburban race-goers. I have no record at my finger-tips of when the Suburban Race-course Bill was passed, but I have some records of Bromley. Bromley! What a race-track it must have been with its little old ramshackle stand, behind which many deeds of villainy were hatched.

Streatham, where the horses went round and round and round, as in a circus, goodness knows how many times when competing in a two-mile race. Don't talk about Chester—the Roodeye is Trafalgar Square compared to a dinner-plate with what Streatham was. And West Drayton of impious memory, where they used to turn over the judge's box if he gave his verdict

to something the " lads of the village " hadn't backed. Egham, where they actually " pinched " the judge's hunter watch, and he threatened to stop the racing unless it was returned intact. It was—with a ton of profuse apologies.

My old friend, the late Teddy Simpson, who did the commissions for the Duke of Beaufort ; Bob Peck ; Alec Taylor of Manton, father of the present bearer of the name ; and that inveterate gambler, Jack Hammond, once told me there was only one old-time race-course that was worse than West Drayton—Lillie Bridge. It must have been s' nice !

My own recollection of Kempton dates back for nearly thirty years. It may sound funny, but I don't see much alteration in the paddock, apart from new buildings. Compared to Hurst Park's paddock it is a beauty spot, where one can roam in summer and get lost among the trees.

I never go to Hurst Park but what I think of Dick Dunn, a popular bookmaker of a time that now seems long ago. Dick had a house near the Victoria Cup starting-post. John Hawke, of the Anti-Gambling League, prosecuted Dick Dunn at Kingston Petty Sessions for betting in the principal ring at Hurst Park. The chairman of the Bench was Mr. John F. Eastwood, a much-respected resident of the village of Esher, and the father of Captain J. C. B. Eastwood, the famous racquets player of the 'nineties.

Fortunately for race-goers and lovers of justice and common sense, the chairman of the Bench was a frequent visitor to Kempton, Hurst and Sandown. He and his brother magistrates gave it as their ruling that a bookmaker was entitled to bet in a ring on the race-course. But for Dick Dunn deciding to fight the case, a verdict as calamitous as the recent ban on Dog-track Totes would have been given. And it is such verdicts that cause people to say " the law's an ass."

CHAPTER II

MY FATHER'S DEATH—BOB COURTNEIDGE BUYS ME AN ENGINE—SIX FORTUNES "GO WEST"—TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF AN ACTOR—I JOIN THE LONDON "ECHO," AND MEET GLYN JONES, STAR REPORTER—THEN THE "EVENING NEWS"—TWO STORIES OF LORD NORTHCLIFFE

IT is funny how one butts into a particular calling. Several successful lawyers I know were not going to be lawyers at all. One of my friends, a skilled accountant, would probably have been a meat salesman in Smithfield if he had carried out his father's wishes, while my uncle, who ought to have been a successful bank manager, threw up an excellent position in the West Indies, and drifted into the theatrical profession to become Lily Langtry's first manager.

As both my mother and father were on the stage, I suppose I should have continued to follow in their footsteps, but somehow or other I never "cottoned" on to the life. I only just remember my father, as he died under tragic circumstances when I was seven years old. Curiously I learned the true circumstances of his death a year ago, though it happened in the year following the suicide of Fred Archer.

I have some remembrances, however, of early days when my parents were touring the provinces with Clarence Holt's companies, *Youth and New Babylon*. "Bob" Courtneidge, father of Cicely Courtneidge, was a great friend of my father, and I recollect that he used to save up all his threepenny bits to put in a big money-box somebody had bought for me. He also brought to the house one day a tremendous model engine, which became my prized possession.

It is a strange world. I have not seen Mr. Robert Courtneidge, so far as I can remember, since my early boyhood days, and I don't suppose he knows that I am in the land of the living unless he chances to read this book.

My mother's father found the money to build the Bijou Theatre at Melbourne. He was a sheep farmer, and a noted man in the Masonic craft. He had so many sheep at his up-country station near Ballarat that he could not count them. He made a fortune. My father's father made four fortunes. The last of these was lost in a huge speculation in Mexican silver mines. Then my grandmother's money, something in the neighbourhood of £20,000, went in the same way—rash speculation. I never knew the true details, and it doesn't matter.

I heard my mother say years afterwards that when the papers came to my father, as the eldest twin son, for his signature in order to break the entail on his mother's estate so that his father could have the handling of the money, he hesitated whether to give his consent or not. When he had posted the documents, duly signed, he was terribly upset. He said : " I believe I have beggared my children." He had.

My uncle—my father's twin brother—whom I have mentioned above, was known as Arthur Weston. For many years he was general manager of the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, in the days of Howard and Wyndham. Afterwards he became manager of the Broadway Theatre at New Cross, and the Grand Theatre at Southampton, owned by Mrs. Mouillot, widow of Fred Mouillot, who had as partner H. H. Morell, a son of the famous physician to the late King Edward of immortal memory, Sir Morell Mackenzie.

It was while my uncle was at the Lyceum, Edinburgh, that I consulted him about going on the stage. His reply to me was : " Think again, my boy—don't ! " I am afraid I did not take his advice, for I answered an advertisement in the *Era* for a " heavy man " to

play in a sketch, and by some strange whim of fate I was engaged, despite the fact that my own actual experience of the stage was nil.

We rehearsed the sketch in the bedroom of the actress who was playing the leading part and financing the show, not a hundred miles from the Houses of Parliament. I could always act a bit, and, having sung at smoking concerts, I hardly suffered from stage fright. At any rate I was word perfect, or nearly so, in the part in four days. We opened at the old Cambridge Music-hall in the Mile End Road. It was afterwards burnt down. Perhaps it was a pity that the calamity did not occur before I made my initial *début* as a professional actor. I say it for this reason : At the opening show I made a mess of the big "thrill," when I had to draw a revolver and attempt to shoot the noble 'ero. The trigger of the revolver caught in the flap of my jacket pocket, and there was I tugging, and tugging, and tugging, and tugging, while the audience waited for the crack of doom.

Fortunately the juvenile man was a much better actor than I. He "gagged" while I tugged, muttering under his breath so that only I could hear : "For hell's sake do something !" I *did*—at last. I got the beastly trigger clear, and hit him over the head with the butt of the pistol, nearly stunning him. Plop ! Down went the curtain, and the situation was saved from the point of "art." The audience thought it was part of the show.

Well, it took about three "doubles" to revive the "juvenile lead," but he wasn't a bad sport. I don't think he really bore me any malice. The manager of the show was for sacking me on the spot, but the leading lady reminded him that we were giving a trial show, and unless the sketch made good there would be no engagement for the company to open for a week on the following Monday night. To cut a long story short, the sketch brought down the house, and we got our week's engagement. Then followed a week in the provinces at one of the "number three" towns—

very "number three" it was—and ten days' "out" until we opened for the continuation of the "tour" at Wigan.

I don't mind saying that our show properly got the "bird" at Wigan. Evidently the locals did not appreciate a London company of first-class (I don't think!) actors. They made catcalls from the pit, and the galleryites, being more expert with their mouths, ladled out the "fruit." I began to think that being on the stage wasn't all honey. I forgot what happened to the sketch, but I decided to chuck in my hand before the leading lady chucked me. After that I drifted around, playing minor parts in what are termed the "smalls." I had a five weeks' summer engagement at Paignton, joined a musical comedy "crowd," which "dried up" in Scotland, and was fortunate enough to win twenty-five "bob" at some local races, which enabled me to pay my passage by boat from Glasgow to London.

It was about this time that the brilliant idea crossed my mind that I was not cut out for an actor. I drifted around again, writing short stories and articles, which were sometimes accepted by kindly editors, but more often not.

Eventually, after taking on a job trying to sell commodities to pastry cooks who did not want them, I secured a job as sub-editor on the London *Echo*, having as my first "chief" Fred W. Ward, who afterwards became "Pinex" of the London *Evening News*.

It was while I was on the *Echo* that I unofficially attended my first race-meeting as a journalist. I say "unofficially" for the reason that the *Echo* (then owned by Mr. Pethick Lawrence of Suffragette fame) strictly tabooed racing. Perhaps I ought not to say "strictly," as, while the powers that were refused to permit any selections for the day's racing to be given in the sports pages nor even the bare description of the running, they were not averse to getting the "stop press" racing results out quickly in order to

beat the *Evening News*, the *Star*, the *Sun* and the rest of the evening newspapers. There were quite a lot of evening newspapers published in London in those days.

But to get back to my muttons. You will be wondering if the policy of my paper was such as I have described, why I went to the races in a "journalistic capacity." I went to do a job of work for another paper, it being my half-day off. The meeting was Hurst Park, and I was accompanied by the late Glyn Jones and Harry Leatherdale, who were at that time two of the best crime reporters in the "street of ink." I know we won a bit, for I purchased a new grey overcoat and—let me say it quickly—a brown bowler hat.

The next day, when I arrived at the office in St. Bride Street and hung up my hat and coat on their usual peg, I felt that if the *Echo* ever did decide to take up racing seriously I should be well equipped to act as their course correspondent. Then the staff came in, one by one, and two by two, just as the animals slid into the wonderful ark that was built by Noah before the flood.

One of the "animals" (I fancy it was our cartoonist) spotted my hat and coat first "pop," as they say in the classics. He cried, "My aunt! Who does this little lot belong to?" which was very indifferent grammar as I had been taught. He put on the coat, then the hat, tilted the head-gear to an angle of forty-five degrees and paraded up and down the long room on the first floor, heralded by a chorus of "Six to four the fie-ld!"

Before Fred W. Ward arrived the whole of the staff present had tried on my "outfit," and the result of considerable skylarking was that a half-pint bottle of Stephens' best "blue-black" was spilt down my coat, while the hat resembled the one that Harry Champion used to wear when he sang those famous lines: "I see you've got your ole brown, see you've got your ole brown, see you've got your ole brown 'at on."

That, I may say, was the first and last time I have ever bought myself a bowler that wasn't black.

Glyn Jones taught me all there was to know about newspapers and newspaper work. I came as a raw novice to the *Echo* office, and I found him one of the best fellows with whom I have ever worked. Unfortunately Glyn was fond of the wine that is red and the bitter that is brown, and, being a generous-hearted soul, he got into all sorts of scrapes when he went out with the lads of the village. I have no hesitation in saying that Glyn Jones knew every police officer in London. He had the entrée to all the police stations, and if any reporter could get a crime story he was the man.

It was Glyn Jones who first took me to the East End. He introduced me to the inspector in charge of Leman Street Police Station, and a host of other officials, whose friendship I found valuable later on. I went with him once to see a Chinese opium den raided, and we watched the "chinks" climbing out of windows by the aid of ropes, scuttling like rats from one house to another, as the police rounded them up. A great story, and Glyn did it well for the paper.

On one occasion Glyn Jones asked me to accompany him to Woolwich. A report had come in that a serious explosion had taken place at a river-side arsenal, and Glyn thought that if he could take along a photographer we might get a picture as well as a story. The authorities were very reticent as to exactly what had happened. Thus all sorts of rumours were afloat. It was hinted that anarchists had tried to blow up the place with a bomb.

Well, we hired a boat and rowed across the river, mooring up under the wall of the arsenal. It was no use going to the front of the building, and endeavouring to ferret out something, for the gatekeeper was as dumb as an oyster, and you could not get by him for nuts. While the photographer and I waited in the boat, Glyn Jones climbed up the outside wall and, seating himself on top, took a squint around the yard.

He called down : " This is the spot ; hole big enough to drop in a wagon."

Now I think Glyn had imbibed " one or two " before we set out on the job. He did not look too safe, perched astride the wall. And all of a sudden we saw him disappear. He had fallen off. Not knowing what to do we waited. I say we waited. We heard a bit of a commotion on the other side of the wall, and an authoritative command : " Halt, or I fire ! "

What had happened was this : In falling off the wall Glyn had dropped into the arms of a sentry on guard with loaded rifle. But did that worry Glyn ? Not a bit. He explained that he was a journalist, had been having a look round, and had lost his footing. I am sure that the sentry did not know what to make of the situation, but Glyn quickly settled matters :

" Look here, old chap," he said to the sentry, " the best thing you can do is to give me a leg up, and I'll get back."

The sentry did.

When on top of the wall again Glyn Jones called to us :

" Give me that camera—quick ! "

In two shakes he had taken a picture, and we all three rowed away for dear life.

" What about you blokes ? " said Glyn, when we were safe on the other side of the river. " I can do with a gargle."

They were a jolly lot of lads on the old *Echo*, and I was sorry to leave the paper, but, being ambitious, I thought I would try to get a better job. Accordingly, one afternoon I walked over to Carmelite House, asked to see Walter J. Evans, who was then editor of the *Evening News*, and put to him the momentous question : " Did he want a sub-editor ? "

I don't know why he took me on, and I think I was the loser financially by going over to the rival paper, for the *Echo* was voluntarily closed down by Pethick Lawrence some few months afterwards, and he generously gave cheques for something like a year's salary to all the staff.

Before I left the *Echo* I had written the story of the fall of Port Arthur, which was expected to happen at any moment. Most of my "story" was published in the *Echo* some months after I had been on the *Evening News*, for the fortress held out day after day and week after week despite the awful privations the gallant defenders suffered.

I am afraid that my early journalistic experiences in Fleet Street have little to do with the "Sport of Kings," so perhaps I had better skip over a few hurdles and get down to the time when Jim Butler and I started to run the *Sporting Budget*, he being responsible for the boxing section, I the racing. Previous to taking on this job I had been foreign editor of the Scripps-MacRae Press Association, now known as the United Press Association of America, under J. W. T. Mason, who afterwards became New York correspondent of the London *Daily Express*, reporter on the *Daily Mirror*, sub-editor on the *Daily Mail* and one of the crime men on the *Daily Express*, under the news-editorship of W. Holt-White and the editorship of R. D. Blumenfeld.

My first big case was the Sevenoaks murder, when the wife of the ill-fated Major Luard was found shot under very mysterious circumstances.

And, before I forget it, more especially as everybody who has been associated with Carmelite House seems to tell "exclusives" about the late Lord Northcliffe, I had better "weigh in" with two which come within my sphere. I had been on the *Evening News* about two months and was one night left in charge of the final edition. I was writing a "fudge," which is the technical term for news which goes in the "stop press" space, when the Great Man came into the room. He nodded to me, and casually picked up some proofs from my basket. One of them was a paragraph describing a steam-roller accident, in which two people had been seriously injured, a lamp-post uprooted from its foundation, and the paving stones torn up for a space of some yards.

The Great Man caught my eye and said quietly :
“ Do you mind about the lamp-post ? ”

Wondering what was coming, I replied that I didn't.

“ Do you mind about the displaced paving stones ? ”

Again I had to admit that I had no interest whatever in them.

“ Then why pad the story with minor details ? All the public cares about is that two people were damn near killed.” And he slowly walked into the machine-room.

Later on I was again engaged on the last edition. A famous novelist had died. I was getting out a bill. On one sheet of “ copy ” paper I had written : “ Death of a Famous Novelist,” on the other : “ Death of —— ” (naming him). Said the Great Man, coming up behind my chair :

“ Which are you going to use ? ”

I replied pat : “ Death of —— ——.”

“ You're right,” he said, “ a lot of people will be damn glad he's dead.”

And now I think I had better defer telling you about my connection with Jimmy Butler and the *Sporting Budget* until the next chapter.

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CHAPTER III

DAYS OF THE OLD BELSIZE—QUEER CARDS VISIT THE OFFICES OF THE
“SPORTING BUDGET”—GERARD AUSTIN AND TED HUMPHREYS—
WHEN CRIPPEN HAD AN OFFICE ABOVE—VON VELTHEIM’S
SUPPOSED BODY—TALE OF A £6000 WIN—“PEGGY” BETTINSON
AND THE NATIONAL SPORTING CLUB

I FIRST met Jimmy, or to give him his full cognomen, James W. Butler, on the day that Joe Plant won the Lincolnshire Handicap on W. T. (“Jack”) Robinson’s horse, Cinderello. He was coming down the stairs at the offices of the *Sporting Budget*, I was going up. We looked at one another and passed the time of day. He had heard that I was to do the racing for his paper, and was, I expect, wondering what sort of a cove he had to handle, for Jimmy, I must tell you, has always been critical of people. He is an Irishman. He would just as soon have a fight as shake hands, or rather that was his temperament in those days. Now, like myself, he has sobered down; he’ll argue first and fight afterwards—if it’s absolutely necessary.

May I say that from the first day we met we took to one another. I have had rows with Jimmy, but never serious riots. When we became dead pals, as we soon did, we knocked about together for years. Jimmy taught me a few things I had not learned about the noble art of self-defence, and two or three afternoons a week we would think it clever to run over to Carpenter’s gymnasium in the Walworth Road and take on the pros with the “mits.” Carpenter was then the champion ball-puncher, and he ran a school of boxing at which many of the shining lights in the fistic world congregated. Later on, Jimmy made me

join the Belsize Boxing Club, where I met Jimmy Dewhurst and a host of others whose names I have forgotten. The sausage and mashed suppers at the Eyre Arms at St. John's Wood, which was the headquarters of the Belsize, were an institution. In the last year I was at the Belsize, Ernie Chandler won the heavies and Brown the middles. They were both great boxers, especially Chandler, who has for some years been acting as secretary to Jeffrey Farnol, the novelist.

The *Sporting Budget* editorial offices in Johnson's Court, E.C., at one time or other housed all the champions in the boxing game. It was there I first met Sam Langford, Jack Johnson, Bombardier Wells, Jabez White, Pat O'Keefe, the peerless Jim Driscoll, Harry Lewis, little Sid Smith, fly-weight champion, Jimmy Wilde, Bill Chase, the Forest Gate butcher, Owen Moran, Matt Wells, Rube Warnes, the best amateur middle-weight I ever saw in the ring, Matt Precious and Billy Plimmer from "Brum," and scores of others. And we had a few racing "heads" in as well, for the *Sporting Budget* was a well-liked illustrated weekly, principally on account of the popularity of its editor, "J. W. B."

On our racing staff were Gerard Austin ("Gerry"), at one time both "Augur" and "Straight Left" of the *Sporting Life*, Ted Humphreys, who acted as course correspondent (also on the *Life*), and your 'umble servant. Gerard Austin was, and is, the best writer on sport I have known among many. He has a scholarly style and is most unorthodox in his descriptions of men and things. He is now on the *Sunday Sportsman*.

On one occasion he had to do a biography for the *Sporting Budget* of a noted bookmaker and boxing promoter whom for some reason he did not personally like. In the course of his eulogy on the subject of his sketch he put in a Greek or Latin phrase which, not being so learned as Gerard, neither the editor nor myself could understand. Feeling sure it must

be all right we passed it, and the paper duly appeared.

The bookmaker was so pleased with what Gerard had written about him that he ordered about six quires of the paper to send round to his friends and relations. He would show the paper to all and sundry saying: "They think this about me." I don't know how it happened, but somebody suggested to him that he ought to have the "foreign phrase" translated. He did. It meant that he was "second cousin to a sewer rat," or something equally polite. I shall never forget him coming to the office with rage in his heart. He wanted to murder the writer of the article, the editor and the whole working staff, but Jimmy managed to mollify him in the end, and we all shook hands.

Before the *Sporting Budget* became known by that name it was called the *Police Budget*. When a horrible murder was committed a double-page picture of the scene of the tragedy always appeared with all the blood and gore complete. There were pictures of terrible-looking characters, kneeling on their victim's chest, and drawing a knife across the throat. Newsagents used to open the paper at the "splash" picture and display it in their windows, when crowds would congregate outside the shops, noses glued to the pane, drinking in all the grim details.

In consequence of the *Sporting Budget's* previous title and contents some weird desperadoes had a penchant for dropping in to "have a chinwag" with the editor. Crippen, the murderer of Belle Elmore, had an office above our offices, which he used as a storeroom for the patent medicines he sold on commission for an American firm. Jimmy and I used to meet the little doctor on the stairs, not knowing the notoriety that was to be his later on. After he had been condemned to death and his paramour, Ethel le Neve, released, Scotland Yard detectives came to see us to find out what we knew about Dr. Crippen.

On one occasion I met the notorious Von Veltheim, who killed Woolf Joel by shooting him in his office in

Johannesburg. For some other crime Von Veltheim was sent to Devil's Island, whence he succeeded in escaping. Here's a rather queer story about him. The body of a huge, hairy man was found floating in the Thames. The limbs and face were horribly swollen by being in the water and the corpse was tightly tied with rope. The police at first thought the dead man was Von Veltheim, but they were wrong. Some time later he turned up again, then disappeared for "keeps." I was always under the impression that he was "bumped off" by one of his former friends, turned enemy.

Edgar Wallace, who had blossomed into a racing journalist among his many other activities, was a frequent visitor. He threatened to sue the editor of the *Sporting Budget* for alleged libel, Jimmy having published a paragraph that the "boys" had set about Edgar in Newmarket High Street and "laid him out." Edgar talked about claiming £1000 damages, but he did not really mean it. But for this little incident Edgar might never have written *Sanders of the River*, which was bought by the proprietors of the *Sporting Budget* and used serially in another paper.

Later on I commissioned a story from Edgar called "The Man who Bought London," which I published in *Yes or No*, a popular periodical I was then editing. Edgar wrote the story—75,000 words—in three days, and received a cheque in payment for, I think, £140. On the following Monday (I gave him the £140 cheque on Friday afternoon) he came to me with a small cheque which he asked me to get our cashier to change. He wanted some "ready." I think he had "melted" the £140 cheque at the races.

I first met Edgar Wallace when he was a special writer and I a sub-editor on the *Evening News*. He had written that famous book *The Four Just Men*, but could not get a publisher to take it, so decided to publish it himself, which he did from an office in Temple Chambers. He showed me the wrapper, what publishers term the "jacket," and asked mv

opinion as to whether he should choose green or yellow paper. For some reason I said "Yellow," and he replied: "Right, I'll take your advice, old man." In those days Edgar had not acquired that long cigarette-holder, which became part and parcel of his good self. He smoked a pipe, and would bring into the "subs'" room at the *News* a half-pound tin of a most expensive tobacco. This he would place on his desk, saying: "Boys, help yourselves," and the "boys," who could only afford to smoke 'bacca at about sixpence per ounce, did—liberally. They all seemed to acquire pipes with huge bowls.

Gerard Austin, who was our principal racing writer on the *Budget*, was always a great sportsman and down-right good fellow to boot. Like most racing journalists in those days he was a bit erratic in his ways, but he delivered his "copy" even if he had to sit up all night to write it. On the night of the Jim Sullivan-Papke fight at the Palladium Music-hall, Gerard was doing the principal story for the *Sporting Life*. He did not like Papke, always remarking that, in his opinion, he was a "dirty fighter." Jim Sullivan was a dead pal, and Gerard wanted to see Jim win.

When the fight started, and Papke kept butting Jim with his head, and hitting in clinches, Gerard got annoyed. He kept getting up from his seat at the reporters' table and shouting words of advice, one sentence of which, many times repeated, was: "Hit him in the guts, Jim." Now that very day a new editor had come to the *Sporting Life*. He kept looking at Gerard, and Gerard kept shouting his pet and, I must say, most applicable injunction to Jim Sullivan. At last the new editor of the *Life* ventured to inquire of somebody the name of the "noisy gentleman" in the front-row seats. He was told, obviously by a pal who wanted to do Gerard a bit of good, that the "noisy gentleman" was the *Sporting Life's* principal boxing writer.

I think I am right in saying that Gerard Austin then decided that the *Life* was not his paper. He

went on to the *Sportsman* as principal racing writer, and instantly made good. One Saturday morning he came in to see Jimmy and I at the *Budget* office. "Come and have one over at the 'Green Dragon.' I have a cab waiting. Can't stop long. Just off to Windsor. Must catch the last special at Waterloo," was what he said.

Well, we went. The "one" lengthened into "two" or maybe "three." We had to leave him and get back to the office. At five o'clock that night the cab was still *outside* the "Green Dragon," and Gerard was still *inside*. He was as sober as a judge. What had happened was that he had met someone and started to yarn about old-time fights. The "yarn" lasted about five hours.

Ted Humphreys, our course correspondent, was a different type to Gerard. He also knew the racing and boxing games from A to Z, but didn't possess Gerard's fluent pen. One of Ted's much-used expressions was that old adage anent the "best-laid schemes of mice and men," and he would work it into his paragraphs whenever he was stuck for words. As he used to post his paragraphs to the office from all parts of the country, it was no unusual thing to receive half a dozen "pars." in the course of the week in which either the "mice" or the "men" had been embodied. Sometimes by way of change Ted would cut the paragraph short at the word "schemes," and add "etc. etc." But you can take it from me that in some form or other he never left out his stock phrase.

Ted was one of the luckiest and also the unluckiest men I have ever met on the Turf. You never knew when he was going to win a "packet" or lose a "packet." He was a good gambler, and would bet in hundreds if he fancied a horse. At one Goodwood meeting he won about £6000. He decided to buy a house, and rang up a friend of his who was an estate agent. He fixed up for the purchase of a nice place in South London, and was going to pay something in the neighbourhood of £3000 for it. His pal, the



Photographs

"STEVE" DONOGHUE



[Sport and General]

GORDON RICHARDS

estate agent, however, happened to be busy on the morning Ted rang up, and Ted accordingly agreed to go and see the house during the ensuing week. On Tuesday he went to the races. On Wednesday he went to the races. On Thursday he went to the races. On Friday there was about £900 left out of the £6000. Never mind. Ted still determined to buy a house, but a smaller one. On Saturday he went to Windsor races, and the rest of the little fortune went "West." I came back with him, and he told me he hadn't a "bean." "Not even enough to buy you a drink. You'll have to stand me one," was his cheerful exclamation.

Ted was once refereeing a boxing display at a local hall in which several well-known heavy-weights were participating. After the show was over some of the boxers, among whom were three champions I could name, were "chewing the cud" over one of Ted's decisions with which they did not agree. Ted happened to hear about the dispute, and the nice things they were saying about him in the dressing-room. He pulled out one of the corner posts from the ring, and brandishing it, made his way to the dressing-room. He stood in the doorway, and challenged the whole room with: "If anybody present—*anybody*—wants their —— eye knocked out they can have it from me." Not a boxer moved. Ted had 'em all scared stiff.

He knew all the "heads" among the race-course "push-up" gangs, and if Ted had been in a "rough house" against real odds there wasn't a man Jack who would not have gone to his aid. Walking along the river bank to Hurst Park races with him one day we were accosted by a little shrimp of a man, who said plaintively: "Give us half a bar, Ted; I'm skint." To my surprise Ted felt in his waistcoat pocket and gave the man a bit of gold.

"Why did you do that, Ted?" I asked presently. "You could have eaten that little rat."

Ted was annoyed with me. "When you have been

racing as long as I have, Arthur, you won't ask such a — silly question," was his terse rejoinder.

He won a race at Kempton Park with a horse called Peter Pax. I saw him in the paddock, and asked him if I could put "my couple" on it, for I had heard it was fancied, but he said: "I don't think I shall beat So-and-so" (naming another horse). The race was run, and Ted's horse literally "skated it." I felt a bit hurt at what I thought his "putting me off," and determined to tell him before the next race. While I was looking for him he came up suddenly and said: "Arthur, I owe you twenty quid, I put you on two pounds s.p."

Promptly he tendered me some notes. "But," said I, "you told me it was no good."

"I know I did," he responded, "but when you spoke to me that old — Bill [he named a well-known racing man of the time] was 'tailing' me. If he'd heard me tell you anything it would have been all over the ring, and I should have got 'fours' to my money."

Ted, when he liked, could what racing folk term "Lord Mayor." One morning he telephoned to his trainer, and a conversation somewhat in this strain transpired: "Is that you, Herbert? [the trainer was Herbert Smyth]. Then listen to what I'm saying. My horses are no — good. Take all the — lot on to the downs and shoot the —." He had got as far as that when the telephone operator's voice came over the line. "If you use such disgraceful language over the telephone I shall have to report you to the supervisor." "Get off the line!" roared Ted. "Report me to your maiden aunt! I'm talking to my — trainer!"

For some years Ted was barred from entering the National Sporting Club, and for that reason he was not very friendly disposed towards the late "Peggy" Bettinson, but the quarrel was patched up. Both men were pretty vitriolic when they had a grievance, and "Peggy," like Ted, did not fear anybody in the world. If he liked you there was nothing "Peggy" wouldn't

do ; if he didn't, then for your own peace of mind it was better to give the famous boxing club in Covent Garden a wide berth.

After "Peggy" died the club was never the same. He was the one man who kept things going, as my friend Jimmy Butler will verify.

CHAPTER IV

OLD FLEET STREET AND THE NEW—RACKETY NIGHTS AT THE PRESS CLUB—STAR MEN OF THE “DAILY EXPRESS”—WALTER J. EVANS PUTS ME IN CHARGE—MY FIRST BIG STORY—THE DEVEREUX MURDER CASE—SACKED!—A FEW WEEKS ON THE “DAILY MIRROR”—A FALSE STORY ABOUT THE QUEEN—EARLY DAYS AT THE “DAILY EXPRESS”—THE MERSTHAM TUNNEL MYSTERY—VINCENT WRAY’S “SCOOP”—THE TRAGEDY OF COLONEL LUARD—WAS THE HOPPERS’ FUND A HOAX?

I OFTEN hear friends whom I have known in Fleet Street twenty-five years declare that things in newspaperland are very different to-day to what they were when Lord Northcliffe founded the *Daily Mail*. To some extent this is true, but much of the old regime and many hard-and-fast ideas in journalism remain. The Bohemian life and atmosphere has gone, never to return. Journalists to-day dress better, few of them drink so hard. They don’t knock about until all hours of the morning as they used to do, save, of course, when they are on a “job of work” for the paper. The Press Club is different from what it used to be when it was situated at the top of Wine Office Court. It was then a rackety place, frequented by rackety men, who spent half the night in the bar and went home with the milk, or not at all. From a purely Bohemian club it has developed into a rendezvous where men of the world meet to discuss the news, sport of the day, lunch comfortably and work in the writing-room far from the madding crowd.

The social side of the club has been greatly developed by the club’s annual President and the committee with numerous “House” dinners to which eminent people are invited. The membership is thrice as strong as it was, and the younger men in the “street

of ink " have thronged to its portals, whereas in the " good old days " the real " lads of the village " ruled the roost. The old-timers say that the Press Club has deteriorated. Well, I dunno. In many respects it is hell changed into Arcadia.

When I first went on the *Echo* the members of the staff had their pint cans hired from a local public-house. These cans used to be alternatively filled with tea and coffee of a morn. Round about noon they would be filled with beer ; the printer's boy could be seen carrying them with a stick between the wire handles—all in a row. I doubt whether the cans were properly washed from one month's end to another. Every man knew his own can, and sometimes we'd toss to see who should pay for the " round." This drinking while working did not stop bright ideas from getting into the paper, but no editor would tolerate his staff doing likewise to-day. Going out to lunch for some was an unknown thing ; there was too much work to be done to leave the office, so we munched sandwiches.

I don't think a good man had the chance in journalism then that he has now. The age of " stunts " had not arrived. Most of the top jobs were held by the lucky few. A sub-editor was well paid if he received £3 10s. a week, the average reporter picking up £3 a week had nothing to grumble about. The average reporter now earns three times as much, and does not have to work so hard for it.

Harry Leatherdale was just about the best-dressed reporter in my early days. He habitually wore a silk hat and frock coat. As he was one of the " star " men of the *Daily Express* we novitiates in Fleet Street thought it a fine thing to be seen in his company.

Harry was one of the very best fellows you could meet, a Bohemian to his finger-tips, but a Bohemian with modern ideas. He and his friend and fellow-member of the *Express* staff, Alphonse Courlander, were regarded as the " brains " among the crime men. Alphonse was the author of several clever novels. Alas ! poor lad, he died young. Then there was

Harold Ashton, a man who knew the whole inside of Scotland Yard, and Bernard Falk, who for many years edited the *Sunday Dispatch*.

Bernard Falk was a reporter on the *Evening News* when I joined the paper. We became good friends, and many years later he engaged me through the good offices of his right-hand man, Bill Taylor, to do a humorous racing column for the *Dispatch*. Falk was one of Northcliffe's "bright young men." He went to Russia and the Far East for the *Mail* during the war, and was given the editorship of the *Dispatch* on his return.

I had been on the *Evening News* about three weeks when Walter J. Evans, the editor, put me in charge of the morning edition. Wilson Ruttle, whom I superseded, had sent out a wrong bill and Northcliffe insisted on his being stood down. Why I was given the responsible position I haven't the foggiest notion, for there were at least three men on the "subs'" table who were better able to do the job, seeing that I had then been less than a year in Fleet Street. One of them was that charming fellow G. F. H. Nicholls, who afterwards became the gossip writer "Quex." J. M. Dick was sports editor, and C. E. ("Johnny") Nash, still with the *News*, his assistant. Edmondson, who was also on the table with me, to everyone's surprise gave up journalism and bought an oil and colourman's business in South London. Another "sub" was Duncan Schwann, whose father was M.P. for the Hyde Division of Cheshire. Duncan afterwards went into Parliament himself, but I never came in contact with him after I left the *News*.

My first big story was the battle between "Roj" and Togo during the Russo-Japanese War. The story "broke" early in the morning and the first editions of the "dailies" did not have the full details. I managed to get four columns of all the latest cablegrams in type for our first edition, and it was such a rush that I recollect having to write the introduction and the headlines on the "stone." It was a relief to

get out to breakfast at half-past nine, knowing that the paper had gone to press with a good account of this great naval battle.

When Mr. Evans came in he asked Bill Colley, the *Evening News* chief sub, to send me to him. "You've not done badly, Sarl," was his only comment. "Keep it up."

I have always considered, and always shall, that Walter J. Evans was one of Fleet Street's greatest editors. He had a wonderful knack of controlling, never asked any man to handle a story he could not handle himself. His capacity for work was amazing. I have seen him take over the "tape" when a big story was coming through and turn out three or four columns of concise details, the facts all marshalled in wonderful array, in double quick time. One of these "stories" was the Commission's report on the scandals of the South African War. In the ordinary way Colley would have handled this, but Evans, coming quietly into the sub-editors' room, said: "I'll do that, Colley, I see you are busy."

Another "story" I had to handle was the Devereux murder. This story also "broke" in the small hours of the morning, and the daily newspapers had but scanty details. Bernard Falk was the first reporter who came into the office that morning, and I sent him post-haste to the scene of the crime. He caught the edition with a column story, which we took over the 'phone. I was going out to breakfast when my bell rang. It was the "Chief." I recognised Northcliffe's voice, but did not know whether he was in the building or a hundred miles away. "What have you done with the Devereux murder?" he asked. "Nearly two columns, sir," I replied. "Then you can sit down and think over how you have been beaten," he told me, and I heard him put down the receiver with a bang. I was naturally a bit perturbed, and when Mr. Evans came in I told him what the "Chief" had said. "All right, Sarl," he responded, "don't worry."

Now there was a firm rule in our office that we did

not "lift" anything from the *Morning Leader*. The *Leader* was the only paper among the "dailies" that had a first-rate story of the crime. I told my editor that I had to get up our story from what the staff reporters brought in. Falk's story was a good one, and I had thought it sufficient to carry the page. The "Chief," however, evidently thought otherwise, which accounted for his hasty reproof on the telephone.

Coming back from breakfast I bought the *Star* (the *Morning Leader* was published from the same office) and I could see that our rival paper had a much more fully detailed report than mine. The "Chief" had realised when he saw the *Leader* that the *Star* reporters, having been given the tip that it was a big story, would be on the scene, closing up avenues of news, well before we could get there. However, I heard nothing further about the matter, so assume that the editor "whitewashed" me for my seeming delinquencies.

Some time after I was shifted on to the final edition, being given charge. I fancy Colley came in early to take my place in the morning. It was while I was running the final edition that I first met Edgar Wallace. He came in with some "copy" for me, one Saturday, having covered the Army and Navy "soccer" match for the front page. That night I had at Edgar's suggestion written a page 1 article, and left it in the literary editor's basket. Staff men who wrote these articles received 10s. 6d. for their work, outside contributors a guinea. I made a few of these extra half-guineas during the next few weeks, but my literary efforts proved my undoing. One day Evans sent for me. I can remember almost word for word what he said as I stood talking to him in his little office. "I am sorry, Sarl, but I don't think you will ever make a good sub-editor. You can write, and ought to be a reporter. I am going to give you a note to Kenealy of the *Mirror*. Go and see him; he may be able to give you a job."

That was the long and short of it. Obviously I was

"fired." I took Evans's note to Kenealy, but he was away, so I interviewed the associate editor, Mr. H. Hamilton Fyfe. He sent me to the late Jack Stokes (afterwards the first "Dalrymple" of the *Mail*), who was then news-editor of the *Mirror*, and Jack gave me a job on the reporting staff.

It was hard work with little results to show for one's labours, for the *Mirror* had several staff reporters and many men on "space." All the news in this paper has of necessity been condensed since it became a picture daily. The reporters were not allowed to write long stories. If you wrote half a column it was always cut to about twenty-five lines.

The first story I went out on was in the East End. A report had come in that the Queen had gone "slumming" and had stopped to speak to a poor woman and had kissed her baby. It seemed on the face of it a pretty story. Unfortunately there was no truth in it. The Queen had not been near the East End, and I had to go back to Stokes and throw the "story" down. As a photographer had accompanied me in order to get a picture of the good woman and the baby, we wasted the better part of the day in trying to verify something that had never happened.

I worked on the *Mirror* reporting staff for about seven weeks, then, seeing that I had not much chance of getting on, called at the *Daily Express* office and asked to see Mr. Ralph D. Blumenfeld, the editor. Somewhat to my surprise he saw me. Editors are generally busy men; they can only be seen by appointment; but remembering my experience with Mr. W. J. Evans, I decided to "chance the ducks." Also, to my surprise, Mr. Blumenfeld offered me a job as sub-editor on the *Express*, which was then published in Tudor Street. I am afraid I refrained from mentioning to him that Evans had said I should never be any good as a "sub." All the same I am sure that my second editor was right. I loathed sub-editing, though I have since had to do a lot of it.

I was very happy on the *Express* under the late

F. Hadfield-Farthing. When I left to take up another job Mr. Blumenfeld was kind enough to say to me : " If ever you want work, Sarl, call round and see me."

Strangely enough I ultimately went back to the *Express* as a reporter and became associated with Harry Leatherdale, Alphonse Courlander, Vincent Wray, W. Holt-White, the news-editor, and all the other bright lads of the staff when the paper had removed to bigger premises in St. Bride Street, nearby the old *Echo* office where I had made my initial start. This would be about the time the Merstham Tunnel Mystery " broke."

Vincent Wray got a real " beat " on this story. He was walking back to his hotel late at night when he met a stranger coming from the railway station off the last London train. Somehow or other they stopped to speak. I think Wray asked the stranger for a match. The stranger turned out to be the brother of the dead girl, Miss Mooney. The police at that time had not discovered her identity, and Wray saw his big chance. He managed to get hold of a telephone, and hastily dictated the story of the night to the man in charge at the *Express* office. Then he took Miss Mooney's brother to the police station.

The *Express* was the only newspaper next day to publish the name of the dead girl. Sir Arthur Pearson, then proprietor of the *Express*, was so pleased at Vincent's " scoop " that he not only complimented him, but gave him a handsome cheque. Poor Vincent ! He was a fine reporter in his hey-day, and a still better writer of short stories. He was one of my best friends in the " street " for many years. He " fell " as many journalists have fallen before and since—and will do so until the end of all time, because they are human—on the Violet Charlesworth Mystery. While Vincent was chasing the elusive Violet across Wales, and had, he thought, located her in hiding, she was in Scotland all the time. Vincent's stories from Wales made excellent reading, but there was no substantiation of

them, reason being that the girl was never there to be "found."

I was on the Sevenoaks Mystery, and remember interviewing that tragic figure Major Luard after his wife had been found dead, presumably murdered. I have never seen a man whose demeanour was so contrary to the prevailing suspicion that he was responsible for her death. His grief was tragic, poignant, terrible in its intensity. I can picture him now, standing on the hearthrug in his drawing-room, wringing his hands, tears rolling down his cheeks.

The Sevenoaks Mystery was the greatest story of my reporting days. Like the Merstham Tunnel Mystery it was never solved. A mystic ring, believed to be of Eastern origin, came into the story. Holt-White sent me to the British Museum to see if the officials there could throw any light on the meaning of the markings on it. It was so long ago that the exact details slip my memory, but nothing came of it, and I always had my doubts as to whether the ring had any connection with the crime.

I am under the impression that Holt-White lived at Sevenoaks at the time. At any rate the *Express* scored day after day while the story was "hot," and practically the whole staff of reporters and the news-editor himself were on it, to the exclusion of other news. It was *the* news for a fortnight on end.

I was on the *Express* when that paper started that much-discussed fund for the Kentish hoppers. Somebody came to the office with a terrible story of distress. The hoppers were without food, and in many cases starving, owing, I think, to climatic conditions. The proprietor of the paper decided to start a fund. The first day the fund opened Lady Meux arrived at the office in her car with a donation of £100. Money simply poured in from all parts, not only money, but foodstuff, biscuits, chocolate, clothes, etc. When the time arrived for making the distribution through local clergy and influential people in the district, the cat was out of the bag. There was no real distress. The

hoppers were perfectly happy and contented. Was it a hoax on the part of somebody that let the paper down ?

For long after there was a standing joke at the *Express* office if any of the editorial staff came in rigged up in a new suit or wearing a new "tile." "Hullo, old man, where did you get that ? Out of the hoppers' fund ?"

CHAPTER V

TURF NOTABILITIES I HAVE MET—DICK WOOTTON AND HIS TWO JOCKEY SONS—TEDDY SIMPSON, STABLE COMMISSIONER—A WONDERFUL WAGER—LORD ROSSLYN'S GAMBLE ON BUCCANEER—TALES OF JIMMY WHITE—THREE SPORTING EARLS—BOB PECK'S QUAIN REJOINDER—E. A. WIGAN, CHRISTMAS DAISY AND HACKLER'S PRIDE

WHEN I lived in Epsom before the war it used to give me great pleasure to walk up to Treadwell House on Sunday evenings and have a smoke and a chat with Richard Wootton, father of Frank and Stanley. I got to know Dick Wootton fairly well, though he was a reticent man in his dealings with sporting journalists. I first met him to speak to when he asked me to call and see him. I had written something about the great riding of his son Frank, who had about that time won the Cesarewitch, and the Treadwell House trainer dropped me a line to the offices of the *Sporting Budget*, telling me I should always find him at home on Sunday evening if I cared to look in and have a cigar.

So one Sunday evening I took him at his word. I was accompanied by my kiddie, then a girl of three summers and in her judgment of things and people about six winters. While I went with Dick Wootton to his snuggerly one of the stable lads showed the kid round the stables. Dick at once made me at home, and I appreciated his hospitality and the talk we had on breeding, for I was then comparatively young in the racing game, and thought it rather a fine thing to be on a friendly footing with one of the most famous trainers in the country.

Just after the war I wanted to write Frank Wootton's

life story, and his father was keen on my doing it, but I fancy the late Sir Edward Hulton heard that a paper with which I was connected wanted the story, and I believe he thought that if Frank did his reminiscences they ought to appear in one of the journals in the Hulton group. At any rate I did not get the story, and nobody ever published it.

I went to Dick Wootton and asked him if the idea had been turned down because of a possible objection by Sir Edward for whom Stanley Wootton was then training. Dick was rather indignant. He told me that he was a democrat to his finger-tips, and he pleased himself what he did, at the same time assuring me that inside influences had not caused him to revise his promise of endeavouring to persuade Frank to let me do the story.

"Then," said I, "if I cannot have Frank's life story, Mr. Wootton, what about yours?" He laughed, telling me that he had forgotten more things than he could remember about racing.

Dick Wootton had many enemies while he was carrying all before him as a trainer, but I always speak of people as I find them. He was kindness exemplified on every occasion when I came into contact with him, and though I never asked for any information about the horses he trained, he more than once gave me valuable hints which, had I been a betting man, would have been worth a good deal of money.

Some years ago Dick Wootton gave up training in order to go back to sheep-farming in Australia, leaving Stanley in charge of the Treadwell House stable.

Stanley soon made good as a trainer. He was a sound jockey, but not quite in the same class as Frank. For one thing I don't think he was keen about being a jockey. Even when he was riding he preferred to potter round with a gun and a dog rather than try his constitution by wasting in order to ride at a handy weight. Just as his father before him he has proved an adept at bringing out promising apprentices, so it is evident that he can teach others an art that he

tabooed himself long before he might have retired from the saddle.

Frank Wootton was not only a jockey but a born horseman. He could do anything with the most unruly animals in the string. I have seen horses run away with stable kids at Treadwell House, and as soon as Frank got on their backs they became as docile as old sheep. At his zenith Frank was one of the best jockeys I have ever known. When he was a mere lad he could hold his own with such an artist in the saddle as the late Danny Maher. Long before he was twenty he was beating Maher in close finishes as many times as Maher beat him. His riding of Demure in the Cesarewitch was a masterly effort for such a light lad. He then weighed about 6 st. 7 lb. I saw him win the Manchester Cup on Marajax and a host of other races, and he ought to have won the Derby on Sir Edward Hulton's Shogun. That day, in my opinion, Frank did not excel himself on Epsom Downs.

The first time Frank started to ride over "sticks" I made the journey to Birmingham to see how he shaped. He was as good a horseman over jumps as he had been on the flat. I don't know what happened, whether he thought he was losing his nerve or not, but he gave up all of a sudden. He, too, went back to Australia. Both Frank and Stanley served throughout the war, gaining much distinction in their soldiering. They are right-down good fellows, worthy sons of a worthy sire.

The late Teddy Simpson, who used to do the stable commissions for the Duke of Beaufort, Jack Hammond and many other prominent owners in the late 'nineties, was a great friend of mine. Teddy would invite me to meet him at the Victoria Club, and after partaking of a drink we would trot over to an A B C shop in the Strand where Teddy said the bacon was good. He was very fond of a plate of bacon and tomatoes and he always insisted to the manageress that the bacon she gave us must be Irish cured. Whether it was or not I never had the foggiest notion, but we were always

told it was. The days we didn't go to the teashop we would drop into Snow's off Piccadilly Circus, where they gave you soles a foot and half long for your three "bob."

Teddy Simpson knew everyone in the racing world, and he survived threescore and ten years of an adventurous life before he retired from regularly going out racing.

One of Teddy's betting feats was when he did the commission for Reve d'Or in the Oaks. He got a lot of money on the night before the race at the Victoria and the Beaufort Clubs, one of the wagers struck being made quite casually with R. H. Fry on the stairs as this famous layer was going up to supper. Speaking from my memory of what Teddy told me it was 2 to 1 to about £2000. I don't know how much money he invested for the owner that night, but as he was not able to complete the entire commission he went down to Epsom next day and put the balance on in the ring. The filly started a raging hot favourite, and won.

On another occasion at Ascot, Teddy was asked by a certain noble patron to put £2000 on his horse in the Gold Cup. Teddy told him that the ring was asking for odds of 4 to 1. He was requested to lay £2000 to £500 on. Having a lot of other business to do he passed the commission on to another commissioner, who said to Teddy: "Right, I shall stand this bet myself." Teddy advised him not to take the risk as he thought the horse was sure to win, but Teddy did not know the full "strength" at the time. The commissioner in question had also been asked by another owner with a horse in the race to take the odds to lose £500.

There were only three runners, one at 4 to 1 on, the second favourite at 4 to 1 against, with any price the third animal. If the outsider won the commissioner was on £2500 to nothing by sticking both bets. If the favourite "clicked" the bet on the second favourite paid the winning stakes, and vice versa. "That was

the best bet any man ever made in his life," was how Teddy put it in telling me the story. Unfortunately the favourite duly obliged, but he only scrambled home a head from the outsider amid great excitement.

Lord Rosslyn in his day was a great racing personality. I was with Teddy Simpson in Piccadilly—I fancy we were going to make a call on Steve Donoghue when he had a flat over a gun-maker's shop—and we met his lordship. Teddy introduced me to him.

Our conversation naturally turned on to racing, and Teddy said: "You ought to write a book, my lord," which Lord Rosslyn eventually did. A great book it was, telling of many follies, but withal full of witty dialogue and piquant stories of the Turf and Stage.

The Earl of Rosslyn owned some good horses, chief of which was Buccaneer, winner of the Ascot Gold Cup, the City and Suburban and the Newmarket Handicap. He finished fourth to Euclid in the "Jubilee," carrying 9 st.

For some extraordinary reason Lord Rosslyn registered the assumed name of "Mr. Herringbone" at Weatherby's, under which *nom de course* he raced for a time. His colours were white, black skull and cross-bones, black cap. One day he asked the famous jockey Jack Watts to ride a horse for him and Jack replied: "No, thank you, my lord, race-riding is quite dangerous enough without having to wear those colours."

The same horse, Buccaneer, whom he bought for £2000 from Reggie Moncrieff, a relation of the late Countess of Dudley, won the Ebor Handicap at York. Reggie managed the animal for Ralph Sneyd, and, unbeknown to Sneyd, he exploited it in a "seller" at Sandown previous to the sale, and landed a big stake. When Rosslyn gave him a £2000 cheque in payment for the horse, Reggie owed his lordship a lot of money over a card debt which was never paid.

On the day of the Ebor the Earl of Rosslyn was staying in Scotland, and he and Noel Fenwick, who was stopping with him, and who also was running a

horse on Knavesmire that afternoon, decided to charter a special train, which they did at a cost of £125. They agreed that if either of them won a race the winner should square up for the train.

They arrived in York at 1 p.m., saw four races, and Lord Rosslyn backed Buccaneer with R. H. Fry, who laid him £10,000 to £1400 in one bet. He then took £5000 to £700 from Joe Pickersgill. Noel Fenwick's horse lost.

Shortly after 8 p.m. they were back in Kirkcaldy for dinner, his lordship the richer by £15,000.

I suppose, when I look back on things, that Jimmy White was just about the most amazing racing personality with whom I have ever come into contact. I shall never believe that he took any great interest in horses except for the glamour they added to his gambling deals. He always thought he knew more about the way an animal should be trained than the skilled man to whom he entrusted it, just as he always imagined that he could run Daly's Theatre better than people who had years of experience in theatrical ventures. The truth is that poor Jimmy knew nothing much about anything save high finance, though he possessed a shrewd head for making easy money.

When he engaged Harry Cottrill and afterwards Jack Fallon to run the Foxhill stable for him after he had purchased it lock, stock and barrel for a very large sum, he would do weird things.

On one occasion he made an expensive purchase of champagne and sent the cases down by rail into Wiltshire. Then he arrived himself, and the first thing he asked Jack Fallon was: "Has the 'bubbly' come?" On being told that it had, he insisted on Jack collecting all the stable boys with picks and shovels to dig into a hillock of chalk, as he affirmed champagne matured better in chalk. The pit was dug, the bottles of champagne duly deposited, and the hole boarded up.

They say that good wine needs no bush. Evidently Jimmy's wine was the right stuff, for it did not remain

long in the chalk pit. One Sunday morning he sent a telegram to say he was bringing a party to Foxhill by train to see the horses gallop on the downs. The party consisted of several actresses from the theatres Jimmy controlled, men about Town and a few real "lads of the village." At lunch they drank the champagne like water, and after the repast nothing would please Jimmy but that the whole Foxhill string should be taken to the downs and galloped for the benefit of his guests.

Not a bit of good the trainer saying that he never took horses out on Sunday afternoon, and that they had done their day's work and were boxed up. Jimmy insisted, and Jimmy ruled, or thought he did. Harry Cottrill must have found him an impossible man.

When Jimmy White won the Lincolnshire with Granelly he was too busy making money over stocks and shares to go to Lincoln. A friend brought him the news of the horse's victory on the Carholme, and Jimmy did not seem at all elated. "Did you back it?" his friend asked, and Jimmy replied: "Yes, I took £20,000 to £1000 on the off-chance."

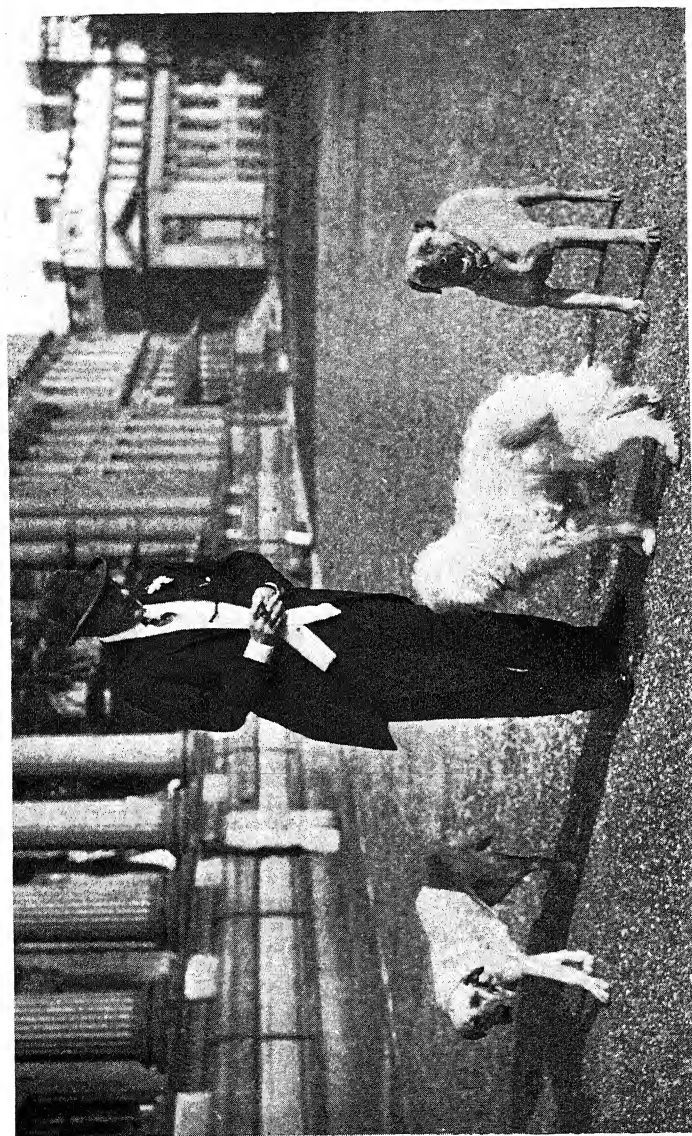
Just after the war I was in Jimmy's office with Jimmy Butler and our conversation mostly turned on racing and boxing. While we were there the telephone rang, and Jimmy White started a conversation with someone about buying shares. We heard him say: "I cannot extend the option; you must take 'em or leave 'em." Apparently the man at the other end of the wire intimated that he would clinch the deal, for Jimmy said: "All right, send along the cheque to-day." Then he rang off and turned to us with the remark: "You boys ought to dabble in this game. I've sold those shares for £12,000; they won't be worth tuppence next week if I am any judge of the market."

Jimmy's luck on the Turf fluctuated, but he won some good-class handicaps. The Cesarewitch with Ivanhoe, the Hunt Cup with Irish Elegance, a Manchester Cup with North Waltham and many £500

events. At one time he thought he would win a classic with Granely, but the horse trained off, and did nothing much until the Lincolnshire came his way as a four-year-old. Jimmy White had several trainers, but fell out with the lot in some way or other.

It is always a pleasure to talk to Lord Lonsdale about horses. I have met him many times in the course of my duties and have always found him willing to discuss any matter of interest to the public. In the old days I used to see him more often at boxing shows than at race meetings, for he was a regular visitor at the National Sporting Club on all the big nights, when he would be "hail-fellow-well-met" with all the champions. Few noblemen know as much about the "noble art" as his lordship of the big cigar and white gardenia. He has seen all the world's best boxers, and can discuss practically every noted fistic encounter of the last forty years. As a young man he was a good exponent of boxing himself. In his time he has owned many famous thoroughbreds, but I doubt whether any hold his affection so much as his wonderful sprinting filly, Myrobella, who is surely the fastest ever bit of goods on four legs. So far Lord Lonsdale has not had the luck to win the Derby, but the St. Leger has come his way with Royal Lancer. If ever he does win the Epsom classic the cheers will surely be heard down in Epsom High Street.

I have come into contact with Lord Derby on several occasions. He is a fellow-member of the London Press Club, and is proud of being so. It was in his honour that Edgar Wallace inaugurated the now famous Derby lunch on the Monday previous to the opening of the Epsom meeting. The menu is always black and white, the Earl of Derby's colours. I think his lordship is of the opinion that his 1933 Derby winner, the gallant little Hyperion, is one of the best animals who ever scored at Epsom. What a pity the colt was not entered in the Two Thousand Guineas. We should then have seen the first Triple Crown winner since Rock Sand.



Photograph

LORD LONSDALE WITH THREE FAVOURITES

On extreme right is the other Myrobella, a bull mastiff bitch.

[By courtesy of the "Sporting Life"]

The late Lord Rosebery I met on several occasions, and always found him most kindly disposed towards members of the Fourth Estate. He was a fine judge of a horse, and a better speaker never went before an audience. It is difficult to say whether his best horse was Ladas or Cicero. Both won the Derby, as did his Sir Visto. He would probably have had a fourth Blue Riband hero if Neil Gow could have been brought up to concert pitch for the great race. This horse defeated Lemberg in one of the most sensational races for the Two Thousand Guineas I have ever witnessed, but the Manton colt turned the tables on his Newmarket conqueror at Epsom.

Even in his last declining years Lord Rosebery never forgot the poor of Epsom. Every Christmas a list of deserving names was prepared for him, and he sent a hundredweight of coals, a large joint of sirloin of beef and other suitable gifts to the "old people." Like all clever men, Lord Rosebery had his little peculiarities. He would have his carriage out with postilions, the harness polished as though he were taking part in a Royal procession, and drive across the downs at night while he smoked his after-dinner cigar. It did not matter if the rain was coming down in torrents, or whether the weather was ideal for a drive. What the grooms must have said when they had the job of cleaning up the harness after the earl's return, over muddy, wind-swept roads, I don't know, but there, they were well paid for their job, and their master was entitled to call the tune.

Bob Peck has been dead many years, but his son is at Foxhill now, training for Mr. Jack Joel. Bob was one of the shrewdest men who ever graced the Turf, and one of the cleverest trainers. He was extra keen on getting the best of the market when he was running a horse he believed to be a good thing. Accordingly he employed several stable commissioners. One day—I think it was at Newmarket—he put a certain man in to do the commission. This man was not so quick at figures as most stable commissioners have to be.

The horse won at a short price, and Bob wanted to know how the commission had panned out.

Said the commissioner, making notes on his race-card with a pencil, the point of which he kept moistening with his lips: "I think we shall average 4 to 1, Mr. Peck." "And a very good price, too," said Bob, turning away. The commissioner called him back "Half a jiffy, Mr. Peck; it won't be quite fours, but it should be 7 to 2." He was still making notes. "That's all right," Bob replied, "seeing that the s.p. is 9 to 4," but again the commissioner detained him. "Just a bit, Mr. Peck; it won't be 7 to 2, but I reckon it will average threes."

By this time Bob was beginning to get a bit hot under the collar. He had to saddle a horse in the next race. "Look here," he exclaimed, "I don't care what the odds average, but *don't put me in debt.*"

The last time I met Mr. E. A. Wigan, the Irish "vet," was on the platform at Southampton West Station. He is one of the shrewdest men on the Turf with whom I have ever come into contact, though of quiet and reserved demeanour. For many years the Purefoy-Cunliffe-Wigan confederacy was unbeatable. First with Lewis as their trainer, then Jack Fallon, they carried all before them in important handicaps, "skinning" the ring for many hundreds of thousands. E. A. Wigan's best horse was Christmas Daisy, dual winner of the Cambridgeshire. I tipped the "Daisy" both years he won in the *Sporting Budget* and had one bet of £200 to £6 about him the first year.

I often see Jack Fallon now, and we talk about the old days at Netheravon. His stories of the minor workings of that once powerful stable would fill the rest of this book with a chapter or two over for a second volume.

I remember a funny story of Hackler's Pride, another dual winner of the Cambridgeshire from Netheravon. Teddy Simpson was on the Continent some two years after the "Pride" had brought off the double when he got into conversation with the proprietor of the

hotel where he was stopping. The conversation turned on racing and the hotel proprietor remarked : " I bought this hotel with my winnings on Hackler's Pride."

" That so ! " said Teddy. " You must have had a sound tip for it." " No, I did not have a tip at all. It was like this : I used to be a waiter at the Café Royal. One of my regular customers often talked to me about horses. He came in about a fortnight before the Cambridgeshire, and he gave me a horse. I think he told me about nearly every horse in the race on other occasions when he came in. Somebody said to me : ' That gentleman to whom you were talking last night is Mr. Fallon, who trains Hackler's Pride. Did he tell you anything about it ? ' Now Hackler's Pride was the one horse he had never mentioned. I thought it funny. I determined to take the plunge. I drew out all my savings and stuck the money on Hackler's Pride, and—well, that is how I bought my hotel."

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CHAPTER VI

QUEER SORTS OF CHAMPIONS—TED HUMPHREYS, "REF" OF ALL SPORTS—AN OUTING TO THE CESAREWITCH WITH "PARSON" PARKES—MY "CROOK" TRAINER FRIEND

ONE day I left Nottingham race-course with a Cockney. He was going south, I north. A remark of his, as he looked up at the sky, qualified him for a job at the Meteorological Office. Said he: "There's a ton o' snow up there. No more racing this week, mark my words. That *would* 'appen when I've got a stone blinder at Hurst on Friday."

Well, one man's meat is another's poison. The frost and ice gives the Ken Wood girls a chance to bathe. I always look for the usual pictures on the back pages of the daily papers when there has been a good, hard frost. You know: "Enjoying a cup of tea after the morning dip."

Swimming was never a sport in which I indulged to any extent, though I have met most of the champions of my time. I like to do mine in the summer when the atmosphere is not too "parky," as they say in the classics, and I would much prefer to take a header off a horse at Becher's Brook than line up among the competitors for the Christmas affair in Hyde Park's Serpentine.

Still, there is no accounting for taste. We must have, and do have, champions at everything. When the champion jumping jockeys are standing down owing to the expressed desire of residents in Iceland that they should not have *all* the snowflakes, other champions come into their own. England is chock-full of 'em. They have contests over this, and contests

over that, from barrow-pushing to haddock-splitting, and singing a canary against a lot of other canaries.

At one time the sporting papers used to take more interest in these contests than they do now, and representatives were sent by the editors to referee. I recollect the late Ted Humphreys telling me about an amusing canary-singing contest he refereed somewhere in the Midlands. Ted in his time had judged practically every sport under the sun, and before he became a race-horse owner he was one of the most fearless boxing referees I ever met.

About this canary-singing stunt, however. Ted sat in a room waiting for the birds to strike up. He waited and waited but not a canary would open its beak. I don't think I am wrong in saying that after half an hour of dead silence Ted badly wanted a "tonic." Under his breath he was calling the canaries, and their owners, all sorts of things that the average respectable dictionary taboos.

All at once one of the little yellow birds looked up and said plaintively: "Tweet-tweet." Ted was off his seat like a rocket.

"You've won, you little —," he growled, and promptly awarded the prize to the lucky owner.

Ted knew all the sports of the East End just as he knew all sports in "Tatts." He could tell when the owner of a trotter was on the job, and he had attended "Boot-Finding" competitions in bar-parlours in Spitalfields, when the atmosphere of the room was so thick with smoke from belching clay pipes and foul language that you could have cut it with a knife.

Never heard of a "Boot-Finding" competition? Well, I hadn't until I met Ted. This is how it starts, or rather how it "useter" start, for I don't for the life of me know if any such contests take place now. Eight or ten gents, having paid their entrance fee of a "bob" or two "bob" a "nob," are seated on a rough deal form. They take off their boots, and the pot-man, who is a sort of starter's assistant, chalks a

number on each man's coat, and a corresponding number on the soles of each pair of boots.

The whole of the boots are then pitched into an empty beer-barrel, which is rolled round the room until the boots are well mixed. When the "ref" says "Go!" all the boots are shot over the floor, and the competitors dash at 'em as though they were storming the Arsenal's gates at a Cup-tie.

The job of the "ref," as Ted told me, was to see that there was no biting or scratching. The first gent who got his own boots on "copped the boodle." Talk about the Grand National! These little "do's" must have beaten cock-fighting.

I think if I owned "Old Nick's" parlour and some of the few rendezvous in Bermondsey, Stratford and Rotherhithe I myself have visited in the good old days when I thought it worth while to see a "needle" knuckle fight, sometimes on Sunday mornings, I should let 'em on a long repairing lease, and live in "Old Nick's" parlour.

The lads, who went there regularly, were good sports, but couldn't they swear if anything happened to upset their apple-cart. You didn't need a collar, but a knuckle-duster was a useful sort of weapon to carry in your pocket. Of course, if they liked you, you were all right, safe as being in a padded cell, but I can tell you if one of the gents present suggested that you, being a "racing cove," would find it easy "guff" to pass some home-made half-crowns on the course, and you chanced to cut up rusty, you would just as likely "cop" a "thick ear" as partake of to-morrow's breakfast. I remember one patron of a certain house of call was quite upset because I assured him that I never did that sort of thing.

Under the old arches in Bermondsey I have seen some rare "mills," and incidentally I have backed a few winners (horses, not fighters) with members of the street bookmaking fraternity, who used to congregate in the vicinity.

An old racing man (I just forget his surname, but

he was a pal of the late "Parson" Parkes and had put many a hundred pounds on a "gee" in his affluent days) first took me to Bermondsey, where I saw a cock-fight in a back garden, which was the real stuff. He also took me to see a contest between the champion haddock-splitter of Spitalfields and the champion ditto of some other East End borough.

I have never split a haddock for the curer in my life, but it was rather marvellous to watch these two exponents in the art going all out for a wager of £5 and twenty "bob" a side. Betting? Oh, yes, there was betting on it, the Spitalfields champion being favourite at 6 to 4 on. And, if I remember rightly, he won with the proverbial stone in hand.

Mention of "Parson" Parkes, a noted race-horse trainer of his day, reminds me that he dragged me out of my house at Epsom to referee a scrap between a young fellow from Oxford and a stable kid. The fight took place in the stable of a public-house which is standing in the "town of salts" to-day. If I told you who was its then proprietor you would recognise it when you next go to the Derby, but for several reasons I shall refrain from giving the house the direct bump of locality.

"The Parson" was one of the greatest lads of the village you could meet in a long day's march. Not only was he a very clever trainer, but he would go a hundred miles to see a fight, or wake you up at five of a morning to help clear a barn of rats with terriers. Anything with a touch of sport about it appealed to "Parson" Parkes. It was for sport that he gave up Holy Orders.

One day a party of us from Epsom went to see the Cesarewitch. I fancy we hired a Ford car from my old friend Tom Hawkins, who now runs a string of horse-boxes for the Epsom trainers. We started from Epsom at something before nine, and some of the party being thirsty, or, maybe, it was to keep out the cold, had about fifteen "goes" of rum and milk before we reached Epping. I think we all backed the

big winner, and one or two other winners besides. Coming back we had a tyre burst at Royston, and the others left the driver of the car and myself to "mend the wheel," while they played billiards.

When we reached the "Elephant and Castle" "The Parson" insisted on having some stewed eels for supper. We parked the "bus," and entered a fish restaurant near the old theatre. When I say that we each partook of four shillings' worth of "stewdells" apiece, I am not exaggerating. And you can still get a lot of "stewdells" for four "bob."

I just forget what time we ran through Tooting, *en route* for Ewell, but we arrived at a certain hotel where "The Parson" was known, to find it all barred and shuttered. "The Parson" said he was going to have a "final" and insisted on knocking up the proprietress, who came from her bed to a second-floor window.

"You are too late, Mr. Parkes," she called out. "You and your friends cannot have any drinks here to-night. Please go away."

"Parson" Parkes expostulated and cajoled, but the lady was adamant. She refused to come down. "All right," said "The Parson," with a twinkle in his eye. "If you don't come down and let us in this brick is going through the window." As he spoke he picked up a brick from the roadside.

None of us thought he meant it, but he did. The brick went through the window all right, and the lady on the floor above shouted in alarm:

"That *was* naughty of you, Mr. Parkes. Please don't throw any more, and I'll come down and let you in, but I know I shall lose my licence."

She didn't, but we did have our drink. The next day "The Parson" sent a glazier along to put in a new pane of glass. To him it was a rather expensive drink, but I am sure he thought it worth the money.

One of the pleasantest fellows I ever met in my life was a dead crook trainer. I certainly do not intend to violate his confidence, for he is now quite a respect-

able member of the community, and, although he made a "packet" by "twisting" the owners for whom he trained, he has more than once confessed to me that fraud in the long run doesn't pay.

I will not go so far as to say that if he could have his time over again he would travel the dead level path, for in that case he might not be possessed of the money he has put away for his old age. What he does admit is that he was lucky in not being "tumbled" by the powers that be, and I am sure that if he ever cares to write a book he could unfold a story of the Turf that would lick creation.

For all the diamonds that ever came out of De Beers I would not say nasty things about him, for I have eaten at his table, and when a man admits that he likes you and treats you as a pal, you would be a pretty rotten sort of a dog to go back on him with the object of obtaining a little notoriety.

I have heard it said that all's fair in love and—journalism, but, possessing notions of my own, I prefer, when having been told something in confidence, to respect that confidence. Perhaps that is why I learn a lot of things from certain followers of the noble sport of racing, who, if they had their just dues, would be languishing in one of the "hotels" which His Majesty the King provides for those of his subjects who blatantly break the laws of the country.

It's funny, but if a publisher were to put out a book entitled *Gentlemen of the Turf*, he would not sell enough copies to pay for the edition, but were he to call it *Crooks of the Turf*, it would go like hot cakes. You see, those people who know less about the psychology of racing than my maiden aunt does about night clubs will always associate the game with villainy.

Personally, I have no quarrel with the owner who hates to know that others outside the stable have benefited by the success of one of his horses. If he takes his sport in that way and gets any satisfaction out of it it is entirely his own business. I don't say

that I admire his principles, but that is a bit beside the point. Doubtless in the course of the year he has a few non-triers saddled, but every horse cannot be fancied every time it runs.

The stickler for purity may retort that in writing in this strain I am encouraging this type of owner to go on in the way he has always acted, but I know that whatever I say, or whatever anybody else may say, it will not make the slightest difference. If you think the leopard can change his spots without the aid of a paint-pot, then all I can say is that we will agree to differ.

It is no use banging the big drum about so-called iniquities of the Turf. Every man who has been racing ten minutes knows that the game is a game of wits. Because it is a game of wits, it doesn't necessarily cease to be a sport. You might as well run down "soccer" football, because certain black sheep have been known to sell a match for filthy lucre. As my friend, the once-crook trainer, says, the real black sheep generally get it in the neck—if they go on long enough.

Before it was necessary to declare a horse as a starter within a scheduled time, trainers have occasionally sent animals to the meetings, and smuggled 'em through the horse-gate under other names, the object being to mislead the reporters who send up "arrivals" to the midday papers, and Press agencies. I don't know that such clever people get much out of it, for racing "regulars" can smell out stable plans with uncanny accuracy.

If Brown Jake is reported as being a runner before racing, and Blue Pete runs in his place, nine backers out of ten immediately say to themselves, if they don't speak their thoughts aloud :

"What's the little lark here?"

All racing men are suspicious, especially those who go the round of the meetings.

CHAPTER VII

FAMILIAR FACES ON THE TRACKS—TALES OF THE "TALE PITCHERS"
—BACKING HORSES THAT HAD ALREADY WON—RACING LUCK AND
RACING MISFORTUNE

OFTEN I am asked what that section of the racing army known as the "regulars" does when fog or frost puts a damper on "the sport of kings." The best answer I can give, though delightfully vague, as I am willing to admit, is "all sorts of things."

What a small place is the world of sport! You see the same faces wherever you go. At boxing matches, whippet races, trotting, billiards, greyhounds, professional running, sculling, coursing, bowls. It all comes within the category of the man who has to, more or less, live by his wits in the great game of "get-a-bit."

In the "rattler" which takes me to Bromford Bridge, or Lingfield Park, I meet familiar faces. I am never surprised if I run across the same people in Wincanton as I do in Wapping. They know me, I know them. We pass the time o' day in this merry-go-round from Ayr to Newton Abbot, and, if I chance to note that my casual race-course acquaintances do not appear to be so flourishing at Ascot as they did at Epsom, I put it down to a bad run with the favourites.

When you have knocked about race-tracks as I have for years, you must rub shoulders with some queer cards. You soon get the hang of their life's history, that is, providing you are not as dense as an iron dust-bin, or, as one of the fraternity put it to me a day or so back, "a stuck-up, unsociable sort of cove."

Now, I would not have that appellation laid at my door for all the money in the Bank of England. I have, of necessity, not from choice, believe me, been compelled to hob-nob with gentlemen who habitually set out to find "mugs," expert exponents of pot-house fighting, game for anything from pitch-and-toss to robbery with violence. I'm not proud of the acquaintance, but there you are, they have crossed my path at some time or other, or I theirs, and, being "sociable like," it has so come about that we occasionally nod to one another.

I know most of the three-card-trick merchants by sight, better, perhaps, than some of the railway police, whose business it is to hound them about. They don't interfere with me, and I don't interfere with them. There have been occasions when I have been requested not to get in a certain compartment. While terribly sorry for the victim seated in the corner, who has been "marked," I always comply with the request. All the preaching in the world will not stop the mug from trying to earn an easy pound by "finding the lady." It is only experience that makes him wise. And when he goes out with a firm resolve to copy Brer Fox, there are plenty of others to take his place.

As Sam Weller would have said, in the racing game it is "Vheels vithin vheels" every day in the "veek" and twice on Sundays. Those racing "regulars" who pay their income-tax when it falls due, and lead respectable lives, must, if they wish to keep the ball a-rolling, "wink the other eye" to a lot that goes on within the select circle of the "schools." The student of human nature finds all the examples he wants without looking for them with a telescope. And the wise man says, when some villainy a bit out of the ordinary is brought to his notice, "It's pretty rotten, but what can I do to stop it?"

There's a chap I often see racing to-day who is the cleverest tale-pitcher you could meet in a march from Land's End to John o' Groats. No, I am not going

to mention his name, because he may have a wife and family who, knowing nothing of his iniquities, probably think him the best in the world. Being sympathetic towards domestic bliss, I am not out to create "trouble at home," not even to my worst enemy.

Well, about this young fellow-me-lad. He was once—and maybe still is—very clever at backing "quick 'uns" with bookmakers. I hate explaining, but in case you don't know what a "quick 'un" is, I may say that it takes the form of betting on a horse after the result is known. He would get the result through on the phone, and before the layers he worked "tumbled" to the swindle, he managed to make a tidy little income.

His methods were rather unorthodox, for he would stroll into a starting-price bookmaker's office, and posing as a commercial traveller, would ask permission to borrow a pen to write a letter. While so engaged the question of racing cropped up. Our friend would tell the bookmaker that he seldom backed horses, but he had received a tip for an animal running that day. The first layer he tried fell neatly into the trap.

"Do you want a bit of ready on it?" he asked.

"I would not mind chancing a fiver if you care to take it," was the reply, and the fiver was passed over.

A minute or so afterwards the bookmaker came from his room into the outer office, where our friend was still busily writing, saying:

"Your horse has won."

"Not it, you couldn't have got the result through yet," came the incredulous suggestion.

But it had won, and at 8 to 1. The backer of the "quick 'un" had known the verdict four minutes before. Of course, this trick was only worked on bookmakers who hadn't a tape machine.

I am assured that he worked this wheeze on several layers in provincial towns, travelling all over the country to rope in other victims. That was where he was clever; he knew that it would not come off twice

in the same office. Without wishing to flatter him I should say that this merchant is twin brother to the 'cute beggar who made a practice of taking a certain bookmaker fishing on the Thames. They used to go out in a boat, and stake in the centre of the stream. While they fished, bets would be made, and curiously enough the "C.B." always backed a winner or two.

It was only when the layer discovered that the names of winners, written on small pieces of wood, were being floated down the river to his piscatorial colleague, that he refused to take any more wagers.

Catch bets are the bane of a bookmaker's life, but you would not think that a layer would fall for this. The gentleman who brought it off is still knocking about in the rings. They were betting twos on the field. Up came his nibs, and, thinking he knew something, he took the odds to £50. Unfortunately, the horse went out in price, and looked like starting at sixes.

"Here, I say," says his nibs, bland-like, "the people I put that fifty on for tell me that I can stick it in my pocket. They won't have it. You'll have to make it sixes to a 'pony' and twos to the other twenty-five. I thought I'd better tell you before the 'off.' I don't want to see *you* in the cart."

The bookmaker looked at him. I say the bookmaker looked at him. I am not surprised. *See him in the cart.* Not bad that!

You might not believe it, perhaps, but I am not "sprucing" when I tell you that the layer actually fell for it, and altered the bet.

Of course, in the fairy books the horse would not have won, but it did.

What a place the racing world is. And some rare lads of the village inhabit it. There was a Leeds barman who was put in to work a commission for a big northern stable, and helped himself to £1000 to £15 three times. He bought a business for his young lady, but the Turf proved such a lure that he went back to it, and after piling up a nice little "parcel" lost

£10,000 in nine months, and eventually took to tram-driving for a living.

The publican-bookie's clerk, who, when "t'owd" man was sick, chanced his arm, and ran the "joint" with two pounds all told in his "kick." Going from strength to strength, he bought the "pub" from his master, who died of delirium tremens.

High gambling of the old order is a thing of the past, but roulette "schools," and places where a game of faro can be had, still abound in the West End. Here you will find many of the race-course "regulars." I know some who sit there night after night working out what they believe to be infallible systems. What they lose on the swings they gain on the roundabouts. They have to gamble, for it is their only means of livelihood.

Some of them may be sharps, with a discerning eye for the "flats," but they are not all crooks. The environment of the race-course brings together all sorts and conditions of men. Artists in back slang, graduates and professors in the patter, which begins with a borrowed race-card or pencil, and ends in the "mug punter" parting with a pound or two to put on a "cert," former exponents of the "noble art," and nine hundred and ninety-nine followers of the playful "gee-gee." I have often wondered, but have never been able to make out how they all manage to keep the pot boiling from January to December.

I remember an incident at Epsom, which still makes me laugh inwardly. I was walking along the course with a friend one Derby day when the pencil-borrower duly made his appearance. My friend proffered a stick of lead which promptly produced hurried notes on the margin of a race-card.

While the borrower was so engaged up came another merchant, who called him aside, and entered into an earnest conversation about horses, finishing up with the advice that he "oughter have a 'pony' on." The pencil-borrower immediately dived in the flapped pocket of his trousers and produced what looked to be

a wad of notes. He peeled off four "flimsies," and remarked: "Put me on a 'score.'"

When the "flimsies" had been handed over the second arrival looked suspiciously at us.

"Who are these people?" he asked. "You know I told you to keep it dark."

"'Sall right, Mr. Jarvis," was the rejoinder, "frens of mine. They won't shout. I've told 'em nothink until I get your permission."

"Of course, if they're friends of yours, Bill, it's O.K. See you later; I've got to finish the stable commission." And he walked quickly away in the direction of the ring.

When merchant Number 2 had gone the pencil-borrower turned to us.

"That's Mr. Jarvis, the trainer (he didn't say which Mr. Jarvis). He's just told me they are backing theirs in the next. (I have noted that the true "tale-pitcher" always says "theirs" and "ours." It sounds good.) Pretty hot lot when they're slipping anything. It's Nobby MacNab; stun in hand. Jus' you wait, my pal'll be back in a jiffy."

Well, we waited; there was no reason why we shouldn't. Both my friend and I were amused. Sure as eggs are eggs, merchant Number 2 returned. Says he, giving us a nod of recognition:

"It's all kif (I have never heard any of the Mr. Jarvises use such a slangy word as "kif"); got you six 'score' from Beresford and Smith."

"Splendid, Mr. Jarvis—splendid, for one that's past the post."

Some more whispering between the pair went on, coupled with nods, "Ums" and "Ahs." Finally merchant Number 2 said:

"I don't mind if they are real pals of yours, Bill, but we mustn't spoil the market."

Suddenly, as it were, the pencil-borrower was struck with a brainy notion. "Do you mind putting a bit on for them, Mr. Jarvis?"

"Mr. Jarvis" said he didn't. "Only a few pounds,

though," he added. "The owner's betting s.p., and we want fives to our money."

To cut a long story short, my friend said he would like a "fiver" on. I said I would have five pounds as well. The pencil-borrower looked at his pal: "Is that too much, Mr. Jarvis? Can you get a 'tenner' on for my old chinas?"

"Think I can manage it, Bill, but they'll have to leave the odds to me, I don't promise to get more than 5 to 1."

It was then that the pencil-borrower suggested that we should hand him over the money.

"Money," said my friend sweetly. "I didn't think you wanted any money. You put the 'tenner' on for us, and deduct it from the stake when the horse has won."

Around us four the silence was so pronounced that you could have heard a mangle drop.

For a moment I thought "Mr. Jarvis" was going to use bad language, but he changed his mind.

All his pal could say was: "Think you're — clever, eh?"

"No," said my friend, "we think *you* are. May I have my pencil, please?"

People who know nothing about the Turf scoff when horse-racing is mentioned in their presence.

"Huh! A nice sort of mob your so-called sport attracts. I've seen 'em going to the races—scum of the earth. Happened to be at Waterloo Station when the races were on at Kempton or somewhere. Never set eyes on such a ragtime lot in my life. If that's sport, old chap, well, give me —"

I never stop to argue with this type of mind. If I did I am sure I should be classed among the "blackguards" who make a living by betting. I am apt to go off the deep end and say that I have not forgotten a few things I learnt at the Belsize. But, of course, they would not know what a boxing glove was, so it would be a waste of time.

There are race-goers—and race-goers. I think I

know the whole caboodle as well as I know my own son. And I will say this: I would sooner trust the average racing follower to keep his word of honour than I would some of the artificial saints I run across from time to time. If you have never studied types, as applied to the seamy side of the race-course, you will find it a deuce of a job to distinguish between good and bad. I am talking of human nature.

I have mixed with the race-course hanger-on, listened to his tale of woe (sometimes, I hope, holding out the helping hand), sympathised with him over his rotten luck when things have gone against him, and I have been told stories that did not come from the habitual liar who gathers sympathy by exploiting pain.

Though I have knocked about all over the place, it has been my lot in life (touch wood) to never have been in that dire extremity when I "haven't a bean." That is why I refrain from showing lofty disdain when a race-course "regular" accosts me, saying "Guv., I'm skint. Can you spring half a dollar?"

After all, it costs nothing to listen, and a friendly glass of beer does cause a man to open his heart. The half-crown I slip into the tale-pitcher's hand cannot alleviate his "trouble at home," but what does it matter?

The race-course hanger-on has a pretty terrible time. He is always under the watchful eye of the police, tradesmen "put the bar up" to his "missus" unless she is prepared to fork out the "ready," his children, if any, are looked upon as objects for compassion because their father is a "low-down racing man." And yet, when in luck, he may be the best parent in the world.

I know many race-course hangers-on who were once affluent as affluency goes. For some reason they left their particular job of work, and drifted into the racing game, to become flotsam on the sea of life. They cannot go back to toil and labour. The opportunity will never occur, so they eke out a small capital, which more often than not dwindles to that quantity known



Photograph]

PATCHING UP AN OLD 'CHASER

David Dale, the Bishopstone trainer, treats Morpheus for sore shins.

[A. Pitcairn-Knowles, Hastings

as "nix," in an endeavour to pit their brains and knowledge against the playful goddess of chance.

These, what I may term "camp followers," don't ask for a lot. They want a "kip," meals of a sort, half a pint when they feel thirsty, and a bit to help "the old woman" out with the dole. When you know them, and they know you, they are the most witty customers you could meet on a long day's march. Optimists? Yes, you can prefix it with "supreme." They live largely on what might have been if the favourite hadn't "sat on the carpet" at the last jump.

Some people think that racing is an easy game. You can take it from me that the regular follower of the sport suffers from more brain fag in his endeavours to sort out the "goods" than an accountant working overtime. In the course of a year he covers more ground (under "seat" on the "rattler" if he hasn't got his fare) than twenty commercial travellers. His temper is more severely tried than a porter at a railway station, whose job it is to direct old ladies to their trains.

He walks farther than all your athletes, who tri-annually endeavour to break the London-to-Brighton record, and his digestive organs are ruined by being asked to do too little at one time, and too much at another. And, after all is said and done, he gets less for his day's labour than the poorest-paid worker.

When you have been racing long enough, you get to know the real "tapper," the fellow who, taking you for a "mug," "pulls your ear" habitually. Having been bitten you tip him the "frozen mit" and pass on. By jockeys, trainers, bookmakers and race-course officials this type of individual is tolerated because he is part and parcel of the game.

Most racing folk are good-natured, jockeys and bookmakers exceptionally so. When Steve Donoghue walks off the course he is accosted by a perfect army of "down-and-outs." One of them remarked to me:

"Steve's the best lad in the world. Never refused

me a dollar or half a 'bar' when he's in luck. Gor bless 'im!"

During the course of the year bookmakers must give away a tidy sum of money to the needy. Like jockeys they are always being "tapped." When things are rosy in the bookmaking game, it is a case of "easy come, easy go," and the donor never grumbles.

The trouble with the race-course "broke" is that he seldom gets up again once he is down. He'll have his run of luck, and may perchance run a borrowed "dollar" into £10 or £15, but it doesn't last. A wad of notes burns a hole in his pocket. He'll start betting in "fivers" in the hope of winning a "parcel"—and the string always breaks.

Not content with having a real good day at the races he must perforce dash off to "the dogs." Thus what he wins on the swings is dissipated on the roundabouts. Still, if it wasn't for "the dogs" I don't know how some of the old racing lads would ever get to a race-track again. They do occasionally have a bit o' luck of a night, and are able to stand the racket of the four "bob" "including admission" to Hurst or Kempton or jump on the jolly old tram at Tooting.

You can be as smug as you like, say it's all wrong and that the race-course "tapper" helps to give the sport a bad name, but you'll be echoing sentiments that are not worth a hang. I have more regard for some of the old race-course lads I know than the cringing creatures who fiddle with their master's till and plead to the magistrate when they get found out that their downfall is due to this curse of backing horses.

That is almost as bad as exploiting a poor blind man round public-house bars, cadging coppers.

CHAPTER VIII

WHICH SHOWS THAT "INFORMATION" IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER
THAN GUESS-WORK

A FRIEND of mine who has been racing for nearly as long as I have is never tired of telling me that you can't beat information. I should like to prove to him that you can. A shoemaker once informed me that you can't beat leather. He might just as well have said that you can't beat carpets.

Information is a fine thing in its way, especially when you know where it comes from. But just as there are good eggs, bad eggs and "shop heggs," as one of the characters said in that famous play *Our Boys*, so are there various degrees of information.

What is information? I am willing to bet that the compiler of my dictionary knows as much about racing as a bull's foot. He says that information is "an act of communicating knowledge, intelligence or news." He further goes on: "Any notice or advice sent or received by message is information." Further, if I derive any knowledge by perception, or by reading or instruction, it is information.

Therefore, if you come to me and say: "Knock this into your nut, Hard Nail is the slowest horse in training," you are imparting "information." Strictly speaking, it would not be at all informative to me, because I already know it, but in the accredited dictionary sense it is "information."

I have always understood that to give racing "information" in the proper way you should adopt a mysterious attitude. First lower your voice, then lean slightly forward, at the same time placing the right

hand, fingers extended, at the north-east corner of the mouth. You should begin :

"Keep it dark," or "This is thumbs," or alternatively, "I got it from Steve Donoghue's chauffeur's young lady's barber." If you don't put it like that your audience may not be impressed with the importance.

Just about the best "information" that could be obtained from any source was picked up by a tout at Newmarket. The trainer concerned actually told me the story, so I know it is authentic. It happened in this way :

On the morning of the Cesarewitch the trainer was in the post office in the High Street sending off a telegram to the owner of a horse that was running in the big race. He had received certain instructions by letter as to the amount the owner wanted to put on his horse, and, having occasion to refer to the letter, the trainer took it out of his pocket, but left it on the counter.

When the trainer was walking out of the post office he suddenly remembered the owner's letter and went back for it. It had vanished. He looked on the floor, but could see no signs of it. Five minutes later, while he was proceeding to the course, a man whom he knew as a local horse-watcher stopped him.

"Excuse me, sir," he said. "I believe you dropped this letter in the post office."

The trainer looked at the tout, the tout looked at the trainer. There was a sort of mutual understanding.

"Of course you've read what's in this," said the trainer, taking the proffered letter.

The tout shook his head. "On my honour, guv'nor——" he was beginning, when the other cut him short.

"Look here, my lad, I don't want any lies. You've read every line, and you are not going out of my sight until after the Cesarewitch is over. I'm putting you five pounds on my horse, and if I see you speak to a living soul you'll not get a red cent."

For close on three hours the trainer never lost sight of the tout. Wherever the trainer went, the tout went as well.

The race was run, and the horse mentioned in the letter came home at a long price. The connections got the cream of the market, and the tout duly received the odds to £5.

At one of the southern meetings a certain gatekeeper opened a telegram in error. He was of the same name as a famous owner, and incidentally a famous gambler. The telegram was from a firm of commission agents asking this owner whether he wanted three thousand pounds on his horse that day or two, as his instructions were not clear.

Knowing that he would get into trouble for opening a telegram intended for one of the club members, the gatekeeper thought it best to take the bull by the horns and confess.

The clerk of the course was furious. Seeing the significance of the telegram, he realised that the only thing to do was to put the fear of sudden death into the gatekeeper. The gatekeeper was so impressed by the penalties that the clerk of the course said would be meted out to him if he dared to open his mouth that he swore he would not mention the matter to a soul, neither would he attempt to obtain any personal gain from the knowledge that had reached him.

It was easy for the clerk of the course to get a telegraph boy to put the message into another envelope and replace it on the members' board. But the clerk of the course was a wily old bird. As soon as betting opened on a certain race he stepped into the ring and took £100 to £30 three times about the favourite. This horse, which belonged to the man to whom the telegram was addressed, started at 6 to 4 on and won in a trot.

Yes, I suppose that was good "information."

There are other forms of "information," however. You may have perceived, or think you have perceived, a jockey take a "pull" at his mount on a certain

occasion when you have been watching a race "down the course." The next time the horse runs you impart the details of this little incident to "Tubby" Clark, and "Tubby," being a thoughtful sort of chap, murmurs: "Ah! Not a yard." Without saying a word to you he goes into the ring, and takes tens to his bit. He is much elevated when the horse comes with a rattle in the market.

Now it's your turn. "Spotter" White, who is always nosing around the stalls in the paddock where the "gees" are "put to rights," beckons to you at Hurst Park. He places his hand slantwise at the north-east corner of his mouth.

"Oi," says he, "the lad wot does Pigeon Toes has just told me they weren't having a 'pop' at Liverpool."

From these two instances you will gather that "information" is not always derived from the owner or trainer. A horse may have run several poor races on hard going. It is not general knowledge that he gallops best in mud. That is "information."

The same horse may have been running in six-furlongs events. You, carefully noting that he always appeared to be running on at the finish, say to yourself: "Wants a mile." That conjecture, when passed on to someone, who has not seen what you have, is "information."

Races are lost owing to indifferent riding, say, on the part of an apprentice. You have probably noted it many times, and have backed your opinion on the first occasion the stable puts a jockey up. "Information" again.

Something gets crossed at the start, and loses half a dozen lengths. On a straight mile like Gatwick, where the Pressmen get a head-on view, and the light is bad, such an incident might well escape notice. You, who have taken up a position near the gate, have noted the mishap for future guidance. Should the horse have run prominently you realise that you possess some priceless "information."

Of course, for "information" to be good "informa-

tion " the horse must win. Nine backers out of ten think nothing of "information" which brings no immediate profit. And yet some of the best "information" I have ever received has resulted in my having to "weigh out" to my bookmaker.

At Derby a year or two ago I suggested to a certain trainer that he stood a fine chance of winning the third event on the card. This trainer is one of the most honest men I have ever met. He trains for a nobleman, who is pretty rich as riches go, and the trainer's own bet on his stable inmates is rarely more than a "fiver."

Somewhat to my surprise he assured me that he had no chance of beating a certain horse in the race. This horse was trained in a stable not far away from his own. He not only advised me to back this other horse, but asked me to put £10 on for him, which I did. In a good finish his own horse won by half a length and the supposed "cinch" from the other stable finished fifth.

In a certain Cambridgeshire which was decided not many years ago, an owner purchased a horse a few hours before the race. From information received, I was well aware that this horse was expected to trot home, bar accidents. I had heard all about the horse some weeks before, and took £500 to £10. On the day of the race I invested a good bit more at s.p. The horse was ridden by a jockey who had never before thrown a leg across him. He lost. With his regular jockey up he would have won. At least that is what I was told.

The shrewdest backers among the professional element I know are those who act on their own initiative. They take no notice of the hundred and one tips that go flying around the race-course. They keep their eyes open and bank on what they see, and in the long run they bank money. They have to make the game pay, otherwise they would throw in their hand.

It is amazing how "information" about horses leaks out. I remember an instance last year when a trainer

ran two in a race. One—the form horse—started at short odds ; the other was, I fancy, a 100 to 6 “shot.” The outsider of the pair won in a trot, and the trainer to my certain knowledge had £300 on the loser and nothing on the winner.

On the face of it that doesn't seem like “information” at all, but luck, and yet it must have been very sound “information” indeed to those who benefited, for the winning horse afterwards won other races and the loser was repeatedly beaten. I was told to back the winner by a bookmaker's runner, who was so confident that this particular animal would “romp it” that he mortgaged his week's wages on it.

Other people with whom I am acquainted backed the horse, and a certain professional punter I know actually went to the extra expense of paying an admission fee to enter the minor enclosure in the belief that he would pick up better prices than the Tattersalls layers were offering. He succeeded in obtaining in one instance £50 to £2.

On one occasion I was strongly advised not to back a horse I had tipped, but to put my “stuff” on another animal in the race, who was just beaten. My informant told me that the jockey on the horse I had tipped had received so many varied instructions as to how he was to ride his mount that he was sure to be flummoxed if it came to a tight finish.

This “information,” on the whole, worked out satisfactorily. At least I thought so when reading the race. My horse was nowhere, and never looked like getting among the leaders until it was too late.

I think I am right in saying that the connections of the horse had a good each-way bet, and afterwards professed to be flabbergasted at the result.

Well, there you are. The cutest people sometimes get caught. There are a few “regulars” whom I meet every day I go out whose judgment I would sooner trust than all the tips that owners and trainers in the goodness of their hearts sometimes consent to impart. A certain man has never tipped me a loser.

Sometimes he runs his "bank," which is generally at low ebb, into twenty or thirty pounds.

I am sure that if he only had the great good fortune to back three consecutive firsts he would be worth a lot of money. The trouble is that he "melts" his winnings on wrong 'uns. In other words, his "big" money is never on the right horse. I have known him to back three winners out of six, and only be a few shillings up on the day.

At every race meeting you can see professional backers and bookmakers' runners clustered round the layers on the rails of the members' enclosure watching points. They know all the people who make bets, and there will be a scamper to get "on" or to advise what is being backed. The fact that a very shrewd "head" has supported a horse to win a substantial stake will cause other shrewd "heads" to row in for their bit.

If Charlie Hannam, for instance, backs three or four horses coupled, and leaves the favourite out, the news is round the ring before you can say "doughnut." This is another type of "information." It does not necessarily mean that Mr. Hannam knows the favourite is "stone cold." Probably in his judgment the favourite has too much to do. Generally he is right.

Fifty pounds, coming from a certain person on a certain horse, is often a far better guide to the situation than four times that amount invested by someone else. Nowadays not many big wagers are struck, but it is rubbish to say that there is no money about. I know a bookmaker in the silver ring who will lay 100 to 14 or 15 six or seven times should anybody be so desirous of booking it.

Strange to say, he is not a man who always has his card "marked." I should prefer to say that he acts on his own judgment rather than on what other people think they know.

CHAPTER IX

NOVICES' LUCK AT RACING—ABSURD GAMING LAWS—CLERGYMAN
WHO BOUGHT DRINKS—THE ASCOT OF TO-DAY

HAVE I said that racing is a funny game? If not, I must rectify the omission. It is one of the funniest games that was ever invented. You can't map "snakes and ladders," "ping-pong," "shove ha'penny," or "selling the pony" with it.

The people who know all about racing are those who have put their first shilling on a horse, and picked up a pound when a 9 to 4 on "shot" has finished among the "also rans." I heard of a delightful instance the other day. A little lady who lives in a south-west suburb told a very hardened old race-goer that she had backed an outsider for five shillings, and drawn the nice little sum of sixty-five shillings from a bookmaker.

Said the old race-goer : "Madam, I am afraid you took a great risk—a very great risk."

"Oh, no," came the sweet reply. "You see, I know all about racing."

The old race-goer raised his hat in silent admiration.

"Madam," he said, "I congratulate you. I have been racing for fifty-three years. I think I may say without boasting that I know practically every trainer in the country, most of the jockeys are my personal friends, but I fear I haven't yet learned the alphabet of racing."

I am sure that if there were no such thing as "novices luck," 99 per cent of what I may term these "dabblers" in the game would cry "Enough" after

they had made their initial bet. They win a bit on the first throw, and promptly run away with the idea that their fortune is made.

Perhaps somebody tells 'em about a system; they become intrigued and give it a run; for a time the system wins (as some systems do); then, as a well-known boxer once remarked: "'Aving 'ad the sweets you must 'ave the sours." The "sours" in racing are bound to come. If you don't believe me ask somebody who *does* know.

To-day on every race-course you see men who were once affluent. They have had the "sweets," platefuls. If they had not gone on they would never have needed to do another day's work. But they went on until Carey Street loomed large on their horizon.

Trainers and owners, men who once had the ball at their feet, now dodge about the ring backing horses for "dollars." Some of 'em are so up against it that they cannot always afford to fork out the admission fee to Tattersalls, so they go in the "Tank."

This is one of the tragedies of racing that always makes me sad.

Fools? Well, they may have been, but does it matter? I always endeavour to accept things as they are, not as I should like them to be. Moralising is a waste of time. It cuts no ice. The ugly head of grim circumstance is always there, rising as a snake from the grass.

Knowledge in most things is a power, but when it comes to racing I am beginning to become sceptical. I have seen many cute people come "unstuck." The more clever they are the greater is the fall. And when they fall at the racing game it is long odds that they go down with a resounding "thump."

Despite what I have seen, despite what I have heard, I am sufficiently an enthusiast to affirm that racing is the finest sport in the world. There is only one hard-and-fast motto: "Keep your head." Don't imagine you are so cute that you are bound to come out on the right side. When in doubt the best bet you can ever

make is "Pocket"—all out of the one into the other!

Don't laugh, I mean it. I do it myself, and I know that on balance I am "quids" in. There was a time when I used to bet on practically every race. I don't know why, but I felt if I didn't I had no interest. I can now go to a race meeting, and it does not worry me if I don't have a wager at all. I do think that you see more when you haven't had a bet, for you are then watching all the horses, not the particular one carrying your money.

Our absurd gambling laws are responsible for a lot of folk "going off the deep end." It is credit betting that puts stay-at-home punters "in the cart." I am sure that if everybody desirous of making a wager with a "bookie" had to put the money down there would be a lot less misery in the land. It is this inevitable "getting out" that turns a small account on the debit side into something that the backer finds it difficult to meet on settling day. Very few people will lay out more ready money than they can afford to lose. Another thing, they bet smaller stakes.

On the opening day of the week it is so easy to wire away or telephone a pound or thirty "bob." You are apt to say to yourself: "If they all lose there's racing on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday." My own experience is that if you don't make a good start you are far more likely to be down than up. That is one reason why I always strut about the paddock when I have backed the first winner.

I am not so narrow-minded as to imagine that if betting offices were legal, offices where backers could make their wagers on dockets and stake their money, it would be a bad thing for the *morale* of the country. I favour the idea for the reason that it would entirely do away with street betting, and all the pernicious evils that accrue from doing something that is illegal.

Despite the efforts of the police, everybody with a grain of common sense knows that this form of illegal betting thrives as much to-day as it did when the

authorities more or less winked the other eye at it. Any backer can get twenty or thirty pounds on with certain bookmakers if he is so desirous, for some of the street bookmakers whose agents dodge in and out of doorways, up courts and alleys, are strong enough financially to stand as much "big" money as they can take.

I grant that Scotland Yard has done a lot to squash the practice, but street betting will never be stamped out. Women bet in the street with as great impunity as men, though they may not actually do so directly. Thanks to the milkman's roundsmen, the green-grocer's assistants, and a hundred and one potmen, barbers, newsagents and other people who know where they can "get a bit on," street betting is as easy as kiss your hand.

In Ireland ready-money betting is done openly. Take Belfast. Every little detail is passed on to the punter. The "pitches," or offices rather, are quite open, and all the runners at English race-meetings are displayed soon after they appear in the frame on the course. In a good many offices the betting on the course is recorded before the "off."

You can bet quite openly in Dublin. A policeman would not trouble to turn his head if he saw anybody writing out a "slip" on a wall. Such a system knocks spots off street betting. It would make a policeman's life worth living!

If betting were made legal some of the policemen I know could also have a "flutter" without having to risk the displeasure of their station sergeant or inspector. I see no reason at all why a policeman should not bet, any more than a parson.

Some parsons do bet. They are the sort of clients untrustworthy starting-price bookmakers like to have on their books. You see, the poor devils (the parsons, not the "bookies") cannot squeal if they don't get paid, because of "the cloth." It would never do for a parson to admit that he had a few shillings on horses now and again. His church would be empty on

Sundays, and the "dear bishop" would be sure to hear about it. And yet why shouldn't a parson be a sport? Many of them are downright good sports.

When I was married the parson who conducted the ceremony took some of my friends up to the village "local." He told them he only drank lemonade himself, but he did not see any reason why he should not stand my pals a pint. The next day he played for the local cricket team, and made 106. He was the brightest lad I've met in a long day's march, and it would have given me the greatest pleasure to have taken him to Liverpool to see the Grand National.

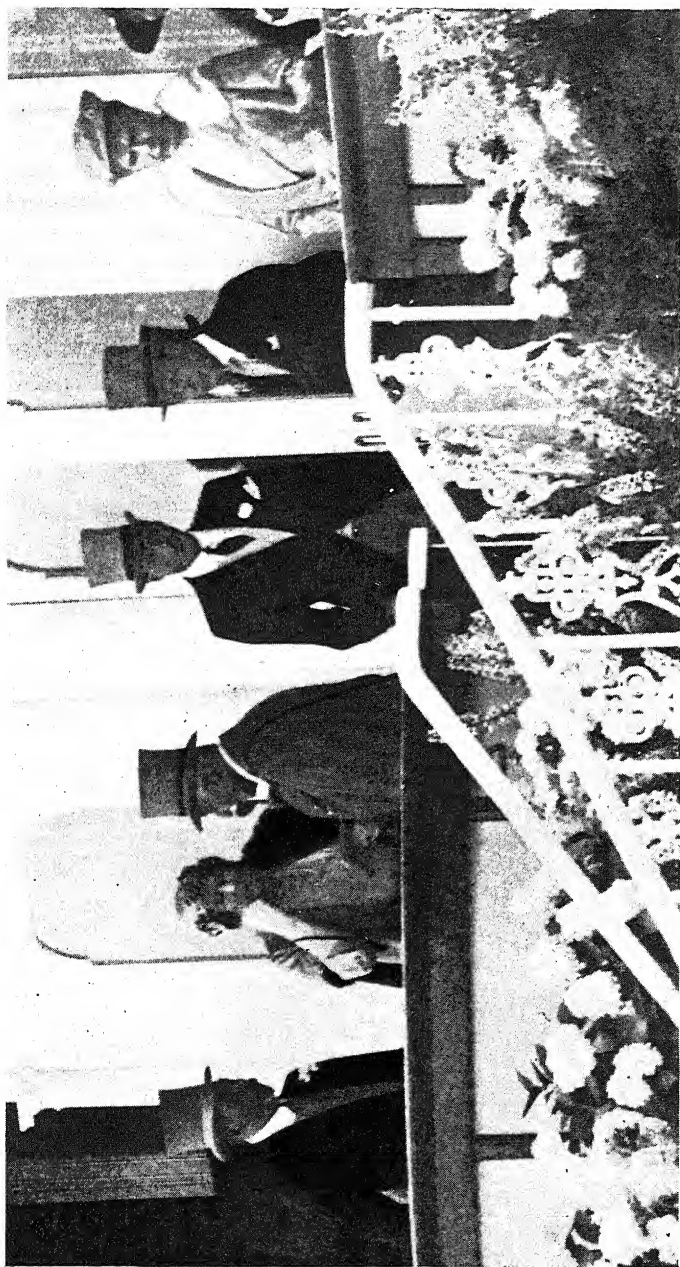
All the old ladies in the village loved him, and all the young men went to hear him preach on the Sabbath. He had a pal who came on holiday to the village to see him. He was a chaplain in the Navy, an excellent cricketer, fine horseman, and could punt a rugby ball with anybody.

He confessed to me that he loved to have a "flutter" on a "gee." Do you know why he did it? I'll tell you. When he won it used to please him to buy the lads on his ship some 'bacca, and things. One of his regrets in life was that he could not ride as an amateur jockey in steeplechases, and, from what I knew of his prowess in the saddle, I am sure the Turf lost a great chap when he decided to go into the Church instead of a racing stable.

If some of the old-timers of the racing world could come back and see the Ascot of to-day, Ascot with its wonderful Tote, its wonderful stands, and its wonderful array of beautifully gowned women and immaculately dressed men, they would rub their eyes in bewilderment.

It always amuses me to turn over the pages of a long-defunct weekly picture paper, *Racing Illustrated*, several bound volumes of which are my proud possessions, and glance at the photographs of the Ascot lawns in 1894 and 1895.

Ascot from a dressy point of view was a great festival in those days, but it was nothing like the



Photograph

IN THE ROYAL BOX AT ASCOT

H.M. the King, the Countess of Mar and Kellie, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, and H.M. the Queen.

[Sport and General]

up-to-date Ascot which everybody who can sneak a day from work visits.

Once the heath was a place where all sorts of larks were carried on. There were frequent impromptu fights between the "top-hats" and "toughs" who found the Royal meeting a happy hunting-ground.

The "pearly kings" from Covent Garden, Spital-fields and other market centres brought out the old "moke" and barrow for a second "do" to follow Epsom, and their Sallys and their Kates came with them, bedecked in their ostrich plumes and tight bodices with many buttons, flourishing huge sticks of rhubarb, which could be bought *en route* for a couple of pence.

Those were the days when the principal stock phrase of one particular season was: "Wait till I cop yer bending." And the stick of rhubarb was the weapon that administered the playful punishment to the delinquent swain.

I recollect my uncle, Arthur Weston, telling me of an Ascot rough-and-tumble in which he was, I fear, one of the ringleaders. He and some other "top-hats" amused themselves by peashooting at a barrow-load of costers, whom they passed on the road while driving down in hansom cabs. The costers naturally objected to the fusillade, and offered resistance.

The fight ended in the defeat of the costers; but there was a police-court sequel, and both costers and "top-hats" were in the dock, charged with causing a disturbance.

Said the chairman of the Bench to one of the "top-hats" who was giving evidence:

"How did this disgraceful affair start?"

The "top-hat," in an endeavour to put up a weak defence, began:

"It was like this, your worship. These low fellows attacked us, and my friends retaliated."

This was too much for the principal defendant among the costers.

“Strewth!” he ejaculated, “the toff’s gone and perged hisself!”

To-day the “top-hats” who visit Ascot have more sense. They don’t want to fight and they don’t want to bet as they did in the days of yore. There is no Captain Machell to keep on taking £1000 to £70 about a horse in the Hunt Cup as long as the bookmakers offered the odds; no “Ready Money” Riley to bring from a capacious pocket of his waistcoat £6000 in notes and plank it on his fancy; no Benzon, the “Jubilee Juggins,” to lay the odds to lose ten thousand of the best which he had picked up the night before in a lucky run at cards.

Such things are not done at Ascot now. It is a jolly good thing that the income-tax collectors see to it that the majority of the “top-hats” who will be found in “Tatts” this year are only able to give their bookmakers one of those green or reddish-brown notes per race (perhaps), while their womenfolk roll up to the jolly old Tote with their two-shilling pieces on “that dear little horse Number Seven, if you please, and would you mind if I also had two shillings on Number Ten for a place?”

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CHAPTER X

MORE ABOUT RACING LUCK AND A TALE OF A HORSE THAT
WAS SCRATCHED

MENTAL philosophy is a wonderful thing when applied to racing, but unfortunately it does not take a very wide range. Most folk I know who engage in the gentle art of endeavouring to spot one to "pip" the favourite are sired by Suspicion out of Doubt. If you ask 'em what will win the three o'clock they scan their race-card, pucker up their brows and reply: "I reckon Funnyface has a chance on the Kempton running—*if it's trying.*"

It is always that inevitable "if it's trying," "if it's out," "if it's having a spin." Really I get so fed up listening to these namby-pamby qualifications that I invariably add the proviso myself should my informant fail to tack on the usual tag.

I don't know why anybody should habitually assume that horses may not be "out." I may be a "mug" at tipping, but I don't think I am a "mug" at racing. I see as much on a race-course as most folk, and I am willing to admit that I sometimes get "information," as it is termed. I know many trainers, I know many jockeys, I know or am acquainted with many owners, but the more people I know who are intimately associated with racing stables the more I am convinced that the product that counts for making money on the Turf is luck with a capital "L."

Everybody has good days and bad days. Trainers at times know less about their horses than the man who picks out winners haphazard from the midday sporting papers. Most trainers know what their horses

ought to do ; the trouble is that the horses have wills of their own. It is sometimes too much of a fag to act up to expectations.

There is hardly an owner breathing who has not at some time in his career received a knock-down blow in the shape of an amazing upheaval of form. It may be race-course form, or form shown on the home gallops. I have seen owners, personal friends of mine, back another horse in a race which their own horse wins.

Of course, the so-called "know-alls" wag their fingers and look as wise as a barnful of owls.

"Tell that to your grandmother," they'll say. "He had a nice little 'packet' on 'away,' I'll be bound."

It's no use telling them that the owner in question did not benefit a penny piece beyond the value of the stake, for they would not believe it.

Racing crooks thrive in novels, but not many thrive on the Turf. I have invented a few crooks myself in the days when my principal source of income was writing fiction in the shape of short stories and serials, but I must admit that some of my characters were not strictly true to life. My imagination helped them along their unvirtuous paths.

There is far more drama in the truth about what happens on a race-course than in all the novels that have ever been penned, and I do think that the mind of the novelist has helped to foster the idea among people who know nothing about the sport that racing is just about the crookedest game that was ever invented. It knocks "finding the lady" into a cocked hat if you are unwise enough to take all you hear seriously.

In games of chance, and racing largely is a game of chance, does anybody really know anything? If every wager you made was a successful wager, don't you think the fascination of the whole business would evaporate? I do. Silly as it may seem, I should hate to win my money every time.

An owner friend of mine who died a few years ago was a most unhappy man when he was winning money

in large chunks. He kept aloof from his pals, and I don't believe a beggar would have "touched" him for a shilling on the days when he came back from a race-course knowing that he had "tickled" the layers up for three or four hundred of the best.

On the contrary, when he had experienced a bad losing day he was as cheerful as a dog with two tails. He would stand "treat" to any Tom, Dick or Harry, offer to lend you a "pony" when you merely asked for the accommodation of a "fiver," and wire to his "missus" to meet him outside a music-hall or a theatre.

Many racing folk live in a world of their own making. In other words, they are funny folks. They do funny things; they keep funny hours; they congregate in funny places; if they don't drink they play cards or billiards half-way through the night; and some of 'em envy the sailor with his wife in every port.

Perhaps because they are racing people they hold these funny ideas I have been trying to tell you about. But if you put it to them in the right way, I am sure most of 'em would agree with me that it is better to be born lucky than rich. I don't say you will get rich if you are lucky, but you might. And then you will have to be as wise as twenty old owls to keep your riches—if you persist in following the playful "gee gee."

When people tell me that luck does not play the leading role on the green stage lined with the white rails, I always tell 'em this story:

A certain owner knew that a certain tipster was sending out a certain horse of his to win a certain race. The tipster had many, many clients, and he was on the odds to a pound with these clients when one of his selections "clicked."

Now this certain owner had two horses in the race, and he had tried them to be about equal. It was in the days when a declaration to win could be made.

"Sent my horse out, has he?" he said to his

trainer. "Well, we'll do him in the eye by winning with the other."

I don't say the above was the exact conversation, but the owner's decree was to this effect.

The declaration to win was duly made, and the horse the tipster had *not* sent out carried the distinguishing cap, and a "bundle" of his owner's "dough." In a great finish the lad riding the stable's second best misunderstood his orders. He defeated the "hot pot" by a short head. The winner started at long odds; the owner of the two horses cursed like old Billy-ho; and the tipster drew something in the neighbourhood of £2000 from his jubilant clients.

He would have drawn a lot more, but, as tipsters will tell you, many clients have a nasty little habit of "taking the knock" after receiving a nice winner. Their promises resemble the crust on the pie that mother bakes.

When a trainer strikes a lucky streak it is surprising how his horses are able to defy the efforts of the handicappers. Since the palmy days of Netheravon, when Jack Fallon was carrying all before him, I cannot recall any trainer who has had such a phenomenal run of luck as the Purefoy-Cunliffe-Wigan combination.

Of course, it is the ability of a trainer that makes for success; but without the help of the Goddess of Luck I venture to assert that it would not be possible to run up a succession of wins in handicaps as the Netheravon people did over a long period.

Training methods and ideas have altered since Fallon's day, and I don't imagine that the clock is relied upon to the extent it was when Ypsilanti, Hackler's Pride, Christmas Daisy and Uninsured were streaking past the post. Old-timers will tell you that there was no luck about Fallon's victories, but this is rubbish. Luck enters into everything.

I would sooner follow a lucky trainer, a lucky owner, a lucky punter or a lucky jockey than act upon the best "information" that money and brains can procure.

Sir Harry Lauder once told me that the key-note of success is enthusiasm. I fully agree with all the greatest Scottish comedian the stage has seen said, but I would like to qualify his remarks with a little proviso. Enthusiasm has solved the fate of nations, brought business men vast fortunes, but the majority of successful men will tell you that luck played some small part in their great game of life.

The trouble about luck is that it does not last. Therefore, it is up to us to make the most of it when fortune is smiling upon us. This is where shrewdness takes a hand with the cards.

In all my own Turf speculations I never go after losses. I make up my mind what amount of money I intend to risk, and stop when it has gone. When I am in luck I don't mind playing up winnings, but when I think my luck is out I refuse to bet at all. At least I only risk very small amounts.

I was told the other day that it requires great restraint to watch racing and not have a financial interest. I don't agree. What is required is great common sense.

When you are out of luck the main thing to do is to keep your head. Don't revile the horse who has let you down, blame the jockey or soundly rate the man who has given you the tip. No doubt he was trying to do you a good turn ; he couldn't help it.

A stroke of luck affects different people in different ways. An old racing "china" of mine takes taxis when he's "tickled up" the books. I don't suppose that he ever wins more than £20, but when this happens good nature oozes through his pores. He'll hail the first cab at the terminus, and he'd hail half a dozen if you'd let him. The driver can be assured of getting half a crown over his legal fare, plus a tip for the "big 'un" next day.

When you wink significantly at a taxi-driver, and you've race-glasses slung over your shoulders, there seems to be the understanding of years between you. In the case of my friend the driver always touches his

cap and says : " 'Thank ye, sir ; 'ope it ' clicks.' " It don't !

On these lucky days there is no restaurant in London too swagger for my friend. One of these times he'll shout :

" Drop me at the Dorchester Grill."

In the restaurant he'll choose a table with the eye of a connoisseur. Then, sure enough, he'll spoil himself with the waiter. He'll say : " A bottle of the best in the house, and I'll tick off the starters for the grub stakes when you've fetched the gargle."

Amazing, isn't it ?

I must tell you a story of this very queer follow. One evening after one of these lucky days he got in tow with another diner, and they did a music-hall and made a night of it. His newly-found friend happened to be a race-horse owner. He was one of those very clever race-horse owners who like to let the public back their 5 to 4 on losers and get the whole of the market when they have something that " clicks " at 100 to 7 after a succession of " also rans."

This race-horse owner I shall call " Mustard " Rogers, but it wasn't his name. I don't know who dubbed him " Mustard," but he certainly was.

His particular grumble on this particular occasion was that somebody had anticipated stable intentions and made his horse, Summer Rambler, favourite for the Stewards' Cup. I think it was the Stewards' Cup, but it doesn't matter a hoot if it was the Salford Borough Handicap. Anyhow, the name of the horse wasn't really Summer Rambler.

My old friend, trying to talk as if he was used to being in the company of owners, remarked :

" Fine game, isn't it ? Details of the trial leaked out, eh, what ? Going to scratch it ? "

You see, he knew a little about " Mustard's " ways. " Mustard " said that as he hadn't put a " bean " on he was not intending to let somebody else benefit.

" Let's have another drink and talk it over," murmured my friend.

Mr. Rogers certainly intended to scratch his horse, but he wanted to get a bit out of it first. It was my friend's suggestion that he wired his commissioner to lay against the horse to win £5000. My friend's corner in the deal was to be £250. Perhaps I ought to say "my acquaintance," for the time has come when I must dissociate myself from any intimate connection with the affair.

The wire was duly sent—in code. It read something like this :

"Williamson, Sporting Club, Leeds. Bark Summer Rambler Wine Glasses Madrid—Rogers."

"Bark" meant "lay against," "wine glasses" meant "to win" and "Madrid" indicated "£5000."

On the following afternoon Mr. Rogers duly received a wire from Leeds which read :

"Done the business—Williamson."

He was still in the company of my acquaintance—they had been finishing a "jag" and I think it must have been a good "jag," for it lasted the better part of thirty-six hours.

Tuesday at Goodwood saw both Mr. Rogers and my acquaintance in the ring. The pen had been put through the name of Summer Rambler by means of a telegram to Messrs. Weatherby's office. Mr. Williamson, the commissioner, was also in the ring, for he didn't on this occasion understand how many beans made five.

When he saw Mr. Rogers he exclaimed :

"What's the bright idea?"

He showed Mr. Rogers a wire. It read : "Back Summer Rambler Wine Glasses Madrid—Rogers."

"Back! I wrote B.A.R.K. You don't mean to tell me you've *backed* the blinkin' horse! I meant lay against it. Oh, lummy!"

Well, there you are. His Majesty's Postal Service

is the best in the world, but the telegraph people do make mistakes at times. The substitution of a " C " for that " R " caused my acquaintance to go to bed for a week. In fact I don't know whether he ever found the £250 to pay Mr. Rogers.

CHAPTER XI

PROFESSIONAL BACKERS AND THEIR WAYS—TWO LUCKY BETS—ACTOR
WHO WENT ON THE TURF—QUEER RACING MENTALITY

THERE'S one thing about a racing man who has had a bit of luck. He'll endeavour to improve his manners and his personal appearance. He'll mix in different circles, travel "first" to the meetings instead of "third," and, if he has "clicked" for a few thousands, you can bet your bottom dollar that he'll buy a house in the suburbs and paint "Nitsichin Lodge" or something high-sounding on the gate.

I know three successful punters who acquired houses in Putney all in the same road and re-christened them "The Larches," "The Firs" and "The Laurels." When the postman went to deliver their letters he thought he had blundered into a forest.

"Easy come, easy go" applies to about 85 per cent of those followers of the playful "gee-gee" who "run into a parcel," but among the other 15 per cent are numbered many front-rank professional backers who have managed to keep what they made, or a great proportion of it.

Financially they are a success, and all credit to them. They made their money by their own cleverness, plus that very necessary spice of luck, so if you hear anybody say in a sneering sort of tone: "I knew that man when he was selling race-cards," take it as a spiteful insinuation.

It is more than probable that the speaker will never be able to sign a cheque for £100 himself unless a wealthy maiden aunt dies and leaves him a bit to go on with.

I am personally acquainted with several professional backers who "sprang from nothing," as the saying goes. They are men of substance; men who can lose £300 or £400 on a race and take defeat without a murmur. It is only the very small man with the very small mind who mutters something about "wishing the horse had fallen and broken its neck," just because he has been "pipped" on the post for a couple of pounds.

It is these front-rank professionals who make the market on practically every race. I don't say all of them bet on every race, for they have their cards "marked" and seldom wager in the dark. There are times when they back as many as three or four horses in a race, but they back them at odds which will show a profit should one of their fancies win.

They can quickly make a horse favourite. Their sources of information are marvellous. They often know, or appear to know, more about a horse than the owner or trainer. They keep their eyes open. They know everybody in the racing game. They know the commissioners who work for the stables. They can judge form to an ounce.

Watch them talking in little groups when most of the real betting has been done. They compare notes and make no secret about what they have backed. To racing they may not seem so important as the book-makers, but you can take it from me that the book-makers would have a pretty bad time if they lost their custom.

I have heard it said that the professional backer is no good to the game. The general complaint seems to be that many of them come into racing without much money and take a lot of money out. Well, in a few instances it may be so, but in my experience as a fairly regular race-goer I cannot recall many big professional backers who "took the knock."

A recognised professional backer has to be able to meet his liabilities every Monday, which is settling day, otherwise he would not be permitted to wager on

credit. Most professionals are members of the principal sporting clubs ; if they are not, someone who is a member settles for them.

To show the confidence existing between professional backers and the big bookmakers (big by repute, not size) you can see wagers in "ponies," "fifties" and hundreds recorded by a mere nod of recognition, and a hurried, pencilled note on a race-card and in the bookmaker's volume.

Hardly ever is there a dispute, and on settling day cheques are passed in payment of accounts. After a big week such as the Derby meeting at Epsom, if outsiders have rolled up race after race, it is sometimes hinted that the layers will find some missing accounts on the Monday. It is not once in a blue moon that there is a delinquent, for professional backers value their names as much as they do their money.

I could tell some tales about these "heads" of the backing fraternity. There was one—the late Charlie Mills—who laid the foundations of his fortune to a chance acquaintanceship at a London sporting club. He became friendly with a noted commissioner, who worked for two or three of the most powerful stables in the South. It was just about a fortnight before the Goodwood meeting.

This commissioner for some years had taken a cottage near the course in co-partnership with a famous trainer, since retired, and two owners, one of whom I believe is dead. At night the quartette used to enjoy their game of Solo, when they'd sit up into the "wee sma' hours."

On the Saturday prior to the opening of the meeting the commissioner had to drop out of the party, owing to sudden illness.

"That's stashed our little game of cards," said the trainer, who had gone to commiserate with the sick commissioner.

"Look here," said the commissioner, "as I'm crooked why not take young Mills? He's a bright lad, and you may find him useful on the course."

The trainer and his other two friends agreed. Young Mills joined the party, and was asked to do the commission for Wise Virgin in the Stewards' Cup. Having unlimited credit in the ring, he also went out to win a "parcel" himself. Actually he won something in the neighbourhood of £30,000 when the horse strolled home. From that day he never looked back.

I knew another professional backer who, acting solely on the advice of a stable-boy, took 20 to 1 to £500 about a horse in the Cambridgeshire. The wager leaked out, as big wagers generally do. The horse was quoted at 8 to 1 in the club betting. This price did not suit the stable. The owner sent somebody to interview the backer, who had "put the cat among the canaries."

"If you care to pass over the bet, or the greater part of it, the horse will run; if you don't he'll be scratched before Monday," was what was said.

Having all his senses about him, and all his wits, the professional told the emissary that the owner could have the whole bet. For this consideration the information was imparted that the horse in question had been tried to have a stone in hand.

He straightway approached one of the biggest bookmaker's in Tattersall's, a man whom he knew he could trust, and "spilt the beans" about the good thing.

"Give me twenty-four hours to recoup myself, and I'll lay you 10 to 1 to £2000," said the bookmaker.

The offer was accepted, the wager booked. The next day the horse was a 9 to 2 chance, and it duly obliged, as they say in the classics.

I know a man who picked up £25,000 on Humorist, and another who bought a half-share in a winning ticket in the Calcutta "sweep" when the first prize ran into nearly six figures. I believe he eventually went broke, which proves that there are exceptions to every rule.

There are all degrees of professional backers. Many of them quite sound men race in the Silver Ring.

They make from £10 to £20 a week. You meet some of them in the "rattler" when going to a race-course. You can tell 'em at a glance; they are racing every day, wet, fine or snow.

Possibly, if you have taken a journey of two hours or so to one of the Midland meetings, you have suddenly heard hoots, yells, much stamping of feet, loud laughter and a storm of bitter expletives coming from a compartment along the corridor train. If you ever do, refrain from jumping up and pulling the communication-cord. There is no murder being committed; not even a minor assault.

This is what is "on": Four gentlemen, known as "regulars," are having a friendly game of cards. One of them has gone "abundance," and come "one light."

As he has played with his opponents many times before, he has no thoughts in his mind that he has been cheated. He bought the pack himself at St. Pancras so is quite aware that nobody has tampered with the cards. His shouted curses are the result of "Nobby" sitting with five trumps to the ten. When a chap has eight diamonds to the ace, king, queen, jack, and another ace, he's something well entitled to call "abundance," and he's something well *not* entitled to get beat.

I must confess, low taste as it may seem, that I often contrive to ride to race-meetings with the "lads." They are out punting professionally every day; I'm not, for I like an occasional game of golf. Also I have other work to do. The reason I travel with the "lads" is because I hope to get a story or two. Seldom is it that I am disappointed.

Going to Newmarket on Cesarewitch day I met a man who had received a college education. He has been street bookmaker in his time, "tic-tac," "runner" and goodness knows what. Once he was on the stage. Judging by the way he amused us in the carriage he must have been, and still is, a pretty good actor.

He told me he had started his stage career by

"busking" on the sands at Bognor. He mentioned two names well known on the music-hall show-bills to-day. One is a woman.

His actual connection with the Turf started when he took up a pitch as a street bookmaker in the vicinity of the Café Royal. The waiters used to come out and hand him bets made by customers dining in the restaurant. He might have been doing it now, but the police collared him and, after his second conviction, he "did time."

So, you see, sheer bad luck caused him to join the ranks of the professional punter. That he likes the life is a foregone conclusion.

Said he to me, in that familiar way we racing folk adopt to complete strangers after we have known 'em ten minutes :

"I wouldn't go back on the halls for three quid a night. What does Hannen Swaffer say? Music-hall artistes! They're three a penny, more's the pity."

Just as there are all sorts of lemons, so are there all sorts of professional backers. There is seldom any effeminate modesty, nor lack of finish about them. Don't imagine because they are racing men that they take no interest in anything but a "midday edition," or that they cannot discuss the vital topics of the time.

Some of them may have a rough-and-ready way, when really enthusiastic over the merits of a horse or a "talkie"; they may punctuate their conversation with expletives by way of chucking in a bit of local colour; but they are not a bad lot of blokes.

When you know 'em as I do.

Racing mentality is a funny thing. It must be a funny thing when a man, who admits that he doesn't know a race-horse from a clothes-horse, can back the first three in the Cesarewitch.

I met such a man in the train coming back from a Newmarket meeting. He had won exactly £20 17s. 6d. on the day after paying all expenses. Besides backing the placed horses in the big race each way, he had backed the first and second winners, and the last.

At first I thought he was "kidding" when he displayed ignorance as to whether Michael Beary was an apprentice, and expressed surprise that the Tote could not lose in the same manner as the bookmaker, but when he asked me if the Cambridgeshire was run at Newmarket I came to the conclusion that I had struck up against a species as rare and distinct as a Great Auk.

I should not exactly describe him as a smug individual, but he certainly seemed proud of what he had done. He told us that he had only been out racing twice that year, and about half a dozen times in the whole course of his existence. I judged him to be a man of fifty odd.

Seemingly, in a South Coast town he owns a row of houses. Someone in the company remarked that he had not got 'em out of racing, in which he concurred. He had acquired 'em by hard, solid work. But he backed horses for the fun of the thing.

He backed horses, starting-price, with local bookmakers. The week before the Cesarewitch he had won £15, the previous week £4 odd and the week before that £25. I smelt a system-monger, and wasn't far wrong. He only backs two-year-olds, and favourites at that. He doesn't touch nurseries, but bets on selling plates.

His wagers are made with three or four bookmakers on, I believe, an increasing stake method. It is inconceivable, knowing nothing about racing, that he could have thought out the idea himself. But there perhaps I err. He must know something about figures, for obviously he bets to figures. I asked him if he had losing weeks. He said :

"Yes, but the losing weeks are not so frequent as the winning weeks. I am well up on balance."

In our party was a short, sharp-featured man who, thirty years or more ago, might have been a jockey. He had mentioned things that happened in the 'eighties. He had seen Primrose Day win the Cesarewitch, and he talked in a knowledgeable way about

Foxhall and Corrie Roy. He had met Fred Archer and "Tiny" White when they were at their zenith; he told us about a jockey who had ridden at 4 st., and was now over 17 st.; he knew the inner history from A to Z of Baker Pasha; and I learned at least one story I had not heard about the infamous Charlie Peace. Also he declared that nine out of ten men were crooks—which I denied.

For nearly fifty years, he told us, he had backed horses. Once he won £9000. He did not look at that moment as if he was worth nine hundred pence, but again I may be wrong. I could see that, like myself, he was sceptical over the bona fides of our mutual acquaintance who possibly imagined that the Cambridgeshire was run in Hyde Park. He kept cocking his eye in my direction, giving a cute little nod with his head, as much as to say:

"Are we listening to a blinking fool, or a blinking liar?"

At last turning to the man, who wagered "at home" on two-year-olds, he asked:

"Excuse me, sir, I don't want to be rude, but you're worth a bit o' money, eh?"

"My property brings me in about £5000 a year, and I pay income-tax on every penny," was the laughing reply.

"Then why the devil do you back horses?" was the little man's disgusted retort.

There was a pause, and we all looked at the man who had been "talking systems." He removed his pipe, borrowed a match to re-light it, and to what he said there was no answer.

"I back horses because it amuses me. If I knew anything about them I should probably go broke inside a month."

I have come to the conclusion that I have never heard truth exemplified so perfectly. It was rather a staggering blow to get from such an unexpected quarter. I am sure the words stuck in the gizzard of the little man who might have been a jockey; they

stuck in mine. I wanted to tell our acquaintance that he was talking bosh. But he wasn't talking bosh. Inwardly I knew it.

Who wouldn't go racing? Tritely I emphasise that it is the "Sport of Kings" and the sport of the masses. Few survive unless they keep their heads, but there are countless would-be followers coming along in their wake.

My acquaintance who might have been a jockey will never make a fortune on the Turf, for the reason that he knows too much about the game. If he does it will go the way of that £9000 he once pouched. But when I come to consider things I am left wondering whether he is not a far happier man than the gentleman who owns his row of houses and is contented to "punt" for small gains.

It is a downright good thing that the average follower of the playful "gee-gee" isn't a "one-game" man, otherwise the first false step, which generally takes the form of a plunge on "summick extra," would throw him so much out of his stride that he would be done for "keeps."

This ever-receding tide in the affairs of those who "race" truly takes a lot of dodging. I have yet to meet an ardent sport who at some period of his career has not "gone a mucker." And the trouble is that he will probably come another "purler," if circumstances mould his mood, when he has "money to burn."

Arthur Binstead ("Pitcher") once said that you can swop your reputation for a "bob," but you can never swop it back. Being a student of logic, I agree. I am sure the promptings of conscience are strong in everybody, but when privation mocks, opportunity with a big "O" is too often there to tempt. That is why some who chance to go amuck on the Turf drift into shady circles.

It is bad for the racing game that it should be so, but despite all the mud that is thrown at those who will probably go on backing horses until the call of Time, I would sooner be penniless on a race-track than walk

the streets of Suburbia asking for alms. If I had no reputation at all I feel that half a crown, plus friendly words in which " Good luck, old bean " predominated, would always be forthcoming.

And the donor would not even call me a knave if I spent his money in beer !

CHAPTER XII

THE LIFE OF A RACE-HORSE—WHEN THE ONE-TIME FOAL WINS THE
DERBY—JERRY—AND TRAGEDY

HAS it ever crossed your mind that the race-horse passes through as many vicissitudes as his master? In youth there is the luxury which comes when, as an unbroken yearling, he has been paraded round the sale ring, and, bought at a high figure, has gone into a fashionable stable. In maturer years, with a triumph in the New Stakes or the Middle Park Stakes to his credit, the great failure, which might have been a great victory, is an established fact when some more brilliant colts than he succeed in relegating him to a place among the "also rans" in the Derby.

Worse disaster follows in the St. Leger, and in comparative old age all that is left is the poverty of a stall in a small establishment and a curt line in the sporting papers announcing that another supposed Triton has been "added to the list." The inevitable dishonour is complete when a four-figure yearling is numbered among the selling 'chasers.

Tragedy? Aye, it is a tragedy, for, having failed when it was thought he would succeed, not even his skeleton is left in some museum to show future generations what a horse he used to be.

Though I have never bred a horse myself my love of animals has prompted me to see something of the inner side of a stud farm. In the old days when I lived at Epsom I was a frequent visitor to The Durdans, where some of the great stallions and brood mares had their home.

I sat up with Sceptre the night she threw her first foal. Bob Latimer, who managed the stud for the late Lord Rosebery, and Dave, the groom ("Cicero" we called him, because the stallion of this name was his particular pet), were good friends of mine.

I have watched young foals grow from the time they are, so to speak, at their mother's knee. They are then so docile that a small child can lead them. As the weeks go on they become skittish, playful, but as changeable as the weather. Some take after the sire, some take after the dam. Few are alike, in colour, temperament or size. Long, lanky little devils! They seem all legs when they have their first sight of the world at large in the home paddocks.

The life of a race-horse is rather a wonderful thing. It is worth a few moments' study. I admit I often find it more interesting than the book of form.

If you have never visited Tattersalls' sale ring I advise you to go at the first opportunity. Probably the best sales to visit from the point of view of the novice are those held at Newmarket and during the race week at Doncaster. Let us suppose that some yearling sales are in progress. Bidding is fast and furious as the various "lots" are led into the enclosure. What a gamble it is! One is knocked down at fifty guineas, another at eighty, and the sensation really starts when the highly bred yearling is walked round for all eyes to see.

The experts have seen him before, or heard all about his make and shape. In their own minds they have already "put a price" upon him, and, if they want him, they bid accordingly. He may fetch a thousand and not be worth a "tenner" when he has been put into training. Indeed, he may never be trained at all owing to some infirmity, not apparent at the time of sale, or an unforeseen accident on the trial gallops.

After the yearlings are disposed of brood mares with foals come up for auction, and it is as one of the latter that the race-horse makes his initial appearance in public.

As he has not yet lost the white downy hair our foal has the appearance of having four white legs. A far-sighted trainer or owner buys him and sends him, just as a father might send his son, to a school—a school for horses. Many of these schools are part and parcel of a training establishment.

On the next occasion we see our foal he is a two-year-old on Newmarket Heath, or at Manton or Chattis Hill. The time has arrived when he has to learn by private trials with older horses, who might be termed the real schoolmasters, what he can do to show his paces. Later on he may be tried over four furlongs against the clock.

Assuming that our two-year-old has been found to be a promising colt his preparation for his early engagements made by his breeder and owner is not hurried. Perhaps he is not highly tested before the end of June.

He is taken, we will say, to the trial ground by the July course on a beautiful summer morning when the lark is high in the sky and the air of the Heath clear and bracing. There are few present. The owner and his good lady, the trainer, the head lad, a jockey or two. The trainer gives his instructions to the rider of the trial horse, the finishing touch is put to the saddling of the colt. The jockeys mount. On that trial the fate of the novice may depend.

Another picture I could paint is when our one-time foal has gone out favourite for the Derby. The scene is the Epsom course, packed with spectators as it has seldom been packed before. The field is coming down the hill to Tattenham Corner. One moment of confusion, one moment of doubt, then a roar from the crowd :

“ The favourite wins ! ”

Our one-time foal, beautifully handled by his rider, sweeps past the post with a couple of lengths to spare. As a three-year-old he has won the Blue Riband of the Turf !

And what comes next ? Retirement at the age of

four. In his first two years at the stud he does not have the luck to sire something nearly as good as himself, then he does sire a colt who carries on the family tradition in the greatest race of all. He has many sons and daughters before he goes into private life with a whole paddock in which to end his declining years. One day his owner comes to visit him, and tells the small grandson at his side of the wonderful triumphs of the gallant old "hoss."

Yes, that is how I should always like it to be.

The actual intelligence of a horse is limited. Thoroughbreds are endowed with more brains than cart or farm horses, light or heavy draughts, but most big horses seem to have more "savvy" than the little fellows.

I am not going to bore you with the technicalities of a horse's mental constitution, but you can take it from me that every horse has fine sense of justice and injustice.

When I was in France during the war I always read the Riot Act to drivers and gunners who knocked their charges about for something they had done in the distant past.

"I give him that, sergeant, for kicking me in the guts at mornin' stables," was a favourite expression of some of my bright young sparks when I pulled them up.

"And I suppose you think he knows why you've coshed him," I'd say. "I hope he kicks you in the same place to-morrow."

If it is necessary to punish an unruly horse, firm action should be taken the moment the offence is committed.

Every horse looks for guidance from his rider, who is, or should be, his master. He is intent on observing the slightest movements, and his respect for those who handle him is governed by the amount of understanding displayed by the rider. That is why all good jockeys are not necessarily good horsemen.

There isn't a horse bred who does not want to follow

his own desires. A vicious horse is sufficiently cute to study his rider's posture and movements, in order that he may at the first opportunity attempt to "get his own back." He'll watch for the opportunity to injure a groom who is not on his guard.

I once had a big, black fellow in my section whom I imagine had been made vicious by being knocked about with a "shoey's" rasp. I gathered this because he only had one eye.

So long as you looked fixedly at him he would obey implicitly if truculently when led from one stall to another, but once you took your eyes off him he'd attempt to savage. One day he lifted me by the collar and ducked me in a trough. I was lucky to get off with a wet shirt.

Horses have great imagination. They magnify everything and become bewildered. They are susceptible to fear. That is why they readily accept the idea of man's superiority. All horses have good memories; they are observant and attentive to detail. They have a wonderful sense of smell.

They can tell good treatment from bad, which accounts for their like and dislike of certain people. There is the instance of Diamond Jubilee, who would have eaten "Morny" Cannon for breakfast, but became a baby in the hands of Herbert Jones.

Perhaps you have wondered why some horses prefer certain courses. Nine times out of ten you can take it that these horses gained some pleasurable experience at that particular venue. Maybe they won their race and were patted and fussed over by their trainer or ockey; given an apple, a lump of sugar.

I have seen an animal fall on two occasions at the same fence. One fall may have occurred two or three months after the other. The horse remembers the incident, and fear enters into his heart as he approaches the obstacle at the next time of asking. His memory of persons, objects and places causes him to have misgivings. And doesn't it apply to us humans as well? What about the boxer who again meets an

opponent who has already given him a hiding? It is always odds on the fellow who has done the trick.

One of my tragic war experiences was when I had to shoot Jerry. I had ridden him for fifteen or sixteen months. We had some fun at times, dodging the long-range stuff that came over the roads leading from Ypres to "Pop."

When our horse-lines were just outside "Flam," I and a particular pal of mine in the Canadian R.F.A. used to ride out to a café some five kilometres away where we indulged in numerous "café-rums." We'd tie up our mounts, and sit for an hour, smoking and listening to a gramophone in the front parlour. I distinctly remember the gramophone. It only had one cracked record:

"The roses round the do-or
Make me love mother mo-re."

Sometimes, I fear, we may have imbibed "one over the eight," but my pal always put it down to the effects of the gramophone. He never suggested that we might refrain from winding up the beastly thing.

Once in the saddle we'd canter along the road, and Jerry and Bob, the grey, never failed to get us safely back to the big dug-out where we sergeants "kipped."

One dark night some clever gink put a glowing red brazier outside a dug-out half-way between our lines and the café, just as we were cantering down the road. A Boche bomber spotted it and "let go with a couple" for a start, one of which dropped plumb on the road thirty yards in front of us. My horse reared, came down with a crash and broke a thigh.

I could not find a vet. officer, so had to borrow a cattle-killer and do the necessary myself, which was all against Army orders, but when I saw poor old Jerry hopping about on three legs I didn't care a damn for Army orders. My pal held his head, while I spanned to the vital spot from his left ear with finger and thumb.

When we got back to our lines, I recollect they wanted me to make a "four" at Solo. I said:

"Boys, blast the bloody cards! To hell with the bloody war! I'm going for a 'shut-eye.'"

I couldn't play with Jerry lying stark on the side of the road, where we had dragged him with his head-rope.

CHAPTER XIII

ON THE PLAYFUL ART OF "DIDDLE" BOOKMAKERS—A COSTLY
EXPERIMENT—EVERY MAN TO HIS OWN TRADE

YOU would have to get up early in the morning to "diddle" a bookmaker. Personally, I have never wanted to indulge in the playful pursuit, but when there is a possibility of getting a bit "on the quick" you can wager all night that some clever gink is going to have a shot at it.

There is, by the way, a vast distinction between getting a bit "on the quick" and getting a bit "on the cross." I think I ought to say this in fairness to those gentlemen who endeavour to engineer starting-price coups by sending over the wires the first chapter of the Book of Genesis followed by two or three hundred telegrams backing a certain horse, the object being to prevent the telegrams reaching the bookmakers until the race has been decided.

When the telegrams are not subsequently withdrawn this is a perfectly legitimate procedure, for each message is properly timed, and, providing the sender has not borrowed somebody else's account, for the purpose of pecuniary gain, no self-respecting bookmaker could refuse to "weigh out" to a legitimate client on winners.

If, on the other hand, you withdraw all the telegrams, or some of them, while the Biblical matter is being sent through by an innocent country postmaster, you having already heard the result of the race, that is distinctly a shady transaction, a criminal offence, and I have no hesitation in saying that it comes under the category of "on the cross."

Of course, some people imagine that the average bookmaker, sitting in his comfortable office, can be likened to a sleek, unsuspecting publican, who feels at peace with all men after a hearty breakfast, knowing full well that the takings in the four-ale bar on the previous evening were two pounds over and above those of the night before. But bookmakers are not like that.

They don't collect little piles of "chink" from the till and set them out in rows on the shelves of the cash-register. They have to send out account forms before the "chink" comes in, sometimes in the form of a letter, which begins :

"DEAR SIR,

i have received your account on Monday last, and am sorry as i hav ad a bad time at the dogs shall not be able to send on cash as promised until nex week

from yours
BILL BROWN."

I can well understand, therefore, that with all these risks they are not going to stand up (or sit down) to be shot at.

Some of my friends on the racing Press get a bit perturbed when they hear that certain bookmakers have written to clients closing their accounts or limiting the amount that can be received for one horse. They seem to think it's not cricket. Well, I dunno. If you are running a business you must know what are your liabilities, otherwise it's odds on your eventually going broke. The office bookmaker's trouble is that he never knows what he may have to pay out. He may get a batch of telegrams for a horse that wins at 20 to 1. If a backer keeps on losing he probably stops betting, for a time at all events. The bookmaker must bet to live.

Once I recommended a friend of mine to a bookmaker whom I had known for years. My friend won £60 the first week, over £100 the second week, and—

you might not believe it, but it's true—he received a cheque from the bookmaker as regularly as clockwork on eleven consecutive Mondays.

One afternoon the “bookie” rang me up to say that, much as he regretted it, he was compelled to recommend my friend to another bookmaker, as he had “tickled him up for over £900.”

Now, my friend thought this an unsportsmanlike action, but I didn't agree. I did think that closing the account was a silly action on the part of the bookmaker, as my friend lost the whole of the nine hundred “quid,” and a bit more, betting with other bookmakers.

Bookmakers don't like lucky punters, though some of them stand the racket and safeguard themselves by backing in the lucky client's horses. The luckiest punter I ever knew married a bookmaker's widow. Her first husband's suits fitted him!

Still, that's by the way. What we are really talking about is something that is a distinction with a difference. Before street “bookies” got to know how many beans make five some of my acquaintances (perhaps, to save any misunderstanding, I ought to say “casual acquaintances”) did a lively trade in getting a few dollars on “quick 'uns.” They would obtain the result over the telephone and semaphore to a pal across the street. This pal, if he were sufficiently lively, could sometimes get a bookmaker, standing in a doorway up a court, to accept a “slip” for a known non-runner in a later race, with an “any-to-come” proviso for the winner. If it only came off two or three times a week it was worth the candle.

A very cute race-course “head,” who usually betted over the 'phone a few seconds before the “off,” wanted £2 on a certain horse. The office “bookie” was about to accept the wager, when he suddenly said:

“Hold on, the result's up. You can't be ‘on’ that one; it's won at 5 to 1.”

Like a shot from a gun the “head” dashed out of the telephone-box to a street bookmaker he knew.

"Am I in time for the three-thirty?" he gasped.

"Yes," said the "bookie." "Got your 'slip' written out?"

Into the speaker's hand the "head" thrust four beautiful "Jimmy o'Goblins" and a piece of paper.

"Two pun each way Golly Eyes," he said. "I've had a tip for it—sure to be in the fust three!"

Years ago at one of the Midland meetings some of the lads devised a scheme for making racing pay. They rented a loft above a stable opposite the race-course. This loft overlooked the straight mile. They had a telephone installed, and when a horse managed to get away with a "flier," or was leading so far that defeat seemed impossible, they would back it good and hard.

The scheme was to get on to the "bookie's" office before the "off," and hold the line up by making one or two bets and inquiries. Needless to say, the majority of the bets were on non-runners, though occasionally they would lose a bit, so as not to make the bookmakers suspicious. Before their little game was "tumbled" they managed to rake in a tidy "parcel."

Another ingenious swindle was worked in Manchester. The street men were again the sufferers. It was done in this way: A room was taken on the top floor and the horses in the programme in the midday edition of a certain newspaper were all numbered. In the street, watching points, were the runners, who had to get "on" the money.

As soon as the result of a race was known up would go in the window-pane a large square of cardboard bearing a number corresponding to the number of the successful horse in the programme. The runners would then dart away and get on bets after time, which was easy, for bookmakers did not know as much as they do now.

What a game it was! If bookmakers became wise you cannot blame them for protecting themselves. Some, I know, adopt rather absurd restrictions, but

after all they are in the business for what they can get out of it. Little "mugs" are not unlike little babies. After you have wiped away their tears they sit up and take notice.

There is no accounting for what some people will do when they dabble in racing. They go out of their way to be tricky. A friend of mine who ran a racing paper knew from what he had seen when watching points down the course that a certain horse would assuredly win a selling race. He gave orders to the principal racing writer to stick it up in black-faced type every time it was entered. This so incensed the owner and trainer that they decided they would miss so many engagements that the tipster on the paper would get tired of pointing to the supposed good thing.

After skirmishing in this way for about two months they saw that the paper had not "starred" their animal in the current edition. They sent the horse to the meeting by road, taking good care that the horse-box should not reach the course until about an hour before the race.

Then, when the numbers went in the frame, the scouts were sent into the ring to pick up all the long odds from the bookmakers. The scouts came back to the paddock helter-skelter to inform the owner that the "bookies" were offering to take 5 to 4.

There was no time to give the jockey any "riding instructions" and, moreover, the jockey was not one with whom they could "monkey" about, so the horse made the most of the running and "cake-walked" the race by four lengths. The s.p. was 11 to 8 on, and the owner was frightened to risk losing a "monkey" to pick up about £400. What with wasted entrance fees, it was a pretty costly business trying, out of pique, to "diddle" a racing tipster.

If so much time wasn't badly spent in envying others their good fortune, I am sure that many who come into the racing game would cast their line in another lake. As soon as some people acquire enough "dough" to purchase their first race-horse, and with it the right

of entry to the weighing-room, they have their letters addressed "Care of the Clerk of the Scales."

These are the gents who are not wanted in the game at all, for you can wager a million that before long they will be kidding themselves that they have bought their trainer and jockey, lock, stock and barrel. That, in their estimation, being so, they start to shout the tune. They are going to get a bit to pay for the keep of the hundred "quid" "skin" they have acquired.

Because they own one horse they think they have a right to know all about all the other people's horses in the stable. Now, if I trained in their particular stable I should jolly well see that they didn't know any more than I wanted them to.

They talk darkly about a coup, which word they pronounce as though it were a house for pigeons, and over a pint or two at the "local" they will tell their particular cronies that they are going to pull off something at Plumpton. But why stop at Plumpton? What's Ascot done?

You might not believe it, but I knew an "owner of horses" who should have stuck to selling tripe and onions. He made money at that game, and had the additional advantage of knocking his "old woman" about on Saturday night, and paying the fine before the magistrate on Monday. Going on the Turf gave him an entirely different outlook on life, and eventually he set up another establishment with an actress, and was landed for bigamy.

If he had kept to his own business he might have owned a row of shops and blossomed forth as a catering magnate, but from the day he bought something on three legs and a "swinger," and by the grace of the Goddess of Luck managed to win a small race with it, he could not do right.

Whatever he turned his hand to nothing ever came of it. His actress could not act, so went back to the "Green Cow"; the chap he left in charge of the tripe business ran away with the till containing the best week's takings of the whole year; his real wife

sold all the furniture and let the house to a rival shop-keeper ; while the bank in which he had placed most of his savings closed its shutters. In short, he became what my Jewish friends would call a "shlemiel."

The last time I met him (after he had done the "time") he was still mug enough to assure me that you could get "abondance" on eight certs and a "chancer." I can only imagine that he never tried it on against some of the lads with whom I occasionally have a "hand" coming back from Newbury.

Still, all these small things and small people I have talked about don't pollute racing so that ceremonially it is unclean. They are merely a part of the great game ; what I might term the "trimmings."

You cannot be a stickler for anything these times. Of necessity you have to take the gravy with the steak and kidney. I hate to see jockeys deliberately pull horses, I hate to hear my racing friends in the ring say : "Next time out — that one," but it doesn't worry me. I will even go so far as to say that I have benefited financially by what I have seen and heard on a race-course.

Please, oh, please don't raise your hands above your head, put your "phisog" on one side and say in pious tones : "Would you do such a thing as that ?" You know, after the fashion of the very staid parson who used to come and take tea with "dear old granny."

I suppose I am only human, just about as human as a very old "china" of mine who picked up a perfectly good return half of a railway ticket at Hurst Park and had the sheer audacity to use it back to Town, despite the knowledge that all railway companies say that their tickets are strictly non-transferable.

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CHAPTER XIV

WANDERING AROUND NEWMARKET—MEMORIES OF CAPTAIN MACHELL
—WHEN BOOKMAKERS MADE BETS FROM CABS—OUT OF A MORN
WITH THE “MEN OF OBSERVATION”—DECADENT IDEAS ON
RACING—OLD DAYS AT ROYSTON

MOST of my Turf acquaintances profess to like Newmarket when the races are on. I prefer Newmarket when the races are off. Then I can wander around to my heart's content, talking horses, seeing horses, hearing the “clipperty-clop” of horse-hoofs, as the second strings and the “spares” pass up the High Street while I am at breakfast.

I recollect an occasion when I went to Newmarket in midwinter. I went there on a flying visit with no particular object in view. I happened to be in Bury St. Edmunds, and thought I would like to see that vast expanse of heath again. So I turned the car in its direction and drove towards those miles of grass-land, flat as a pancake (or so it seems to be).

To the stranger in the land, Newmarket in the off season is just like many another country town. It now has its Woolworth's. I suppose Newmarket is not very much different from Henley-on-Thames or Ross-on-the-Wye. I said “to the stranger.” The man who knows his Newmarket would laugh at the idea. Reading what I have written, it strikes me as being queer to express myself in this way. I don't know what better way I could put it.

The man who knows his Newmarket would point to the Jockey Club Rooms; he would wag a playful finger at the Rutland, and indicate the imposing

gateways that lead to the many stable-yards on each side of the main street. Possibly he would indicate a house on the terrace, high above the roadway, and tell me that I must have seen Lord Lonsdale's "mustard-pot" a-standing there. In case I may be misunderstood, I had better say that the noble earl has from time immemorial owned and been driven in a yellow car. He has a house on the terrace and on race days this yellow car is conspicuous before the portal.

On the day when I went to Newmarket from Bury I wandered into the cemetery which race-goers pass on their pilgrimage to the course. I looked at the grave where Captain Machell rests. Memories were revived by the sight of the dead man's name. On the Turf Machell was a law unto himself. Probably we shall never see his like again.

I thought of his many coups in the days of Jim Jewitt: of his wonderful "National" wins when J. Maunsell Richardson, a Lincolnshire farmer, won the great race for him on Disturbance and Reugny. Before my time? Aye, the "Captain" was going out of racing when I was coming in, but I remember seeing him as a boy, and his grim, determined face with drooping moustache has always left a fixed impression on my mind.

It was Machell who went one afternoon into the betting ring at Alexandra Park to ask what the book-makers would lay against a two-year-old he was running. He was told by a layer on the rails that the best price he could offer was £500 to £400.

The "Captain" laughed. "Five to four about a green youngster. Why, I'll bet *you* six hundred to four hundred twice, and three times if you like."

The wager was booked. Five minutes afterwards Machell's judgment was vindicated. In a marvellous finish his "green" two-year-old was beaten a neck. Had the offered odds been what the "Captain" regarded as fair he would probably have taken them to lose £2000.

Captain Machell! A gambler pure and simple.

He won fortunes at racing and lost fortunes, but he must have won a great deal more than he lost. They said that he'd back flies running up a wall. He lived in the days when queer wagers were the ways of men.

Many Turf notabilities are buried in Newmarket Cemetery. Fred C. Archer, trainer of Double Chance. A famous name! It seems but yesterday when I knew young Keeble, the jockey. A promising lad—wiped out long before his time. Scions of families connected with racing for generation after generation cannot walk the paths of Newmarket Cemetery without seeing their names carved on pillars of stone.

Being a fatalist, I would dwell on a note that is sad, but the Cambridge Road is ahead of us and at that point, where the horses were started for that now unwanted race, the Whip (10 st. each over four miles round Choke Jade, and on to the Rowley Mile, to finish past the place where the red post used to be), there must be memories galore to those who knew their Newmarket forty years ago.

The Links course, past the top of the town, is within my recollection as a jumping track. You can see the old stand and the relics of what was once a betting ring. These times many of the locally trained jumpers do their morning "school" over this defunct race-course.

It is a marvellous experience to be on that vast expanse of heath when nobody else appears to be abroad. I have done the early morning gallops and thoroughly enjoyed my breakfast after swopping notes and notions with the "men of observation," but only once have I been on Newmarket Heath towards the close of a winter's afternoon with naught but the north-east wind for company.

Like spectres in the mist, the Rowley Mile stands appear to have been built by hands that meant them to be ugly, if imposing. A half-turn to the left, and in the dim distance you can discern the "Ditch" with its gap through which the first real glimpse of the Cesarewitch field is seen. At one time there was a

notice that no right-of-way existed along its ridge, but this has long since been juggled out of existence, and quite right, too.

I have not the foggiest notion who made the "Ditch," but a facetious friend of mine once suggested that in the Stone Age a game similar to golf was played by giants using a ball as big as a football and twelve-foot clubs. They made the "Ditch," sez he, for a bunker! What I do know about the "Ditch" is that from its farthest ridge you get an excellent idea of something that is *not* going to win the Cesarewitch. Also it's a tiring walk back to the stands.

Before the first Rowley Mile stands were built bookmakers betted from cabs and carriages at "the cords." Some were in a ring opposite the "Bushes." The judge's box was dragged from winning-post to winning-post. And while the field were racing on the track a brigade of horsemen endeavoured to keep pace, shouting curses and encouragement to the jockeys.

I am told that the price of admission to the so-called stand was ten shillings a meeting. As an advocate of cheaper racing I should like to bring this matter to the attention of certain race-course executives who think that we have more "spending money" now. I am also assured that some of these olden days gate-keepers let many of their particular "chinas" in free and put a percentage of the takings in their own pockets.

There was a lot of "sharping" in those days, signals being made from the various winning-posts to the ring, so as to enable clever gentlemen to get on "quick 'uns." An old-timer whom I met in the town tells me that foreigners would come to see racing at Newmarket and they'd wait about the course until the last race had been decided, asking when the sport was going to begin. You see, there were such a lot of winning-posts that these "strangers within the gate" missed the boat.

The tipsters who have worn out the pavement between the post office and the "White Hart" are

just as "broke" as the tipsters who congregate in the hostelrys around Epsom and other sporting towns. They have lost their money backing Newmarket horses. They have always got a "dark 'un" up their sleeve, a "dark 'un" that has done a marvellous gallop on the heath while the "men of observation" are thinking of getting out of bed and feeling for their umbrellas. If it is so, knowing the "men of observation," these "dark 'uns" have been trained in the night.

Watching gallops on Newmarket Heath is no sinecure. For the benefit of the uninitiated I may say that the "men of observation" have been at the game for "donkeys' years." They are up with the lark, and on the gallops morning after morning, in all weathers.

It is no joke to stand on this bleak stretch of heath for two or three hours, when the wind is in the north-east, with race-glasses glued to the eyes, making a detailed report of the work done by more than a dozen different trainers.

Jack Jarvis's first string, for instance, may consist of from thirty-five to forty-odd horses. The "men of observation" can tell you the names of every animal by sight. I have never met such chaps with an eye for detail as these Newmarket horse-watchers, though I have been on the training gallops in many parts of the country.

As Sid King remarked to me one morning when we were watching a mixed gallop: "You want eyes in the back of your head for this job."

While we were watching two classic entrants line up a mile away across the heath, four of Sam Darling's two-year-olds came a sharp burst on our immediate right. Tiny specks they looked in the distance, almost under the race-course rails. They were within a quarter of a mile of us, and pulling up, before we realised that a trial was taking place; but the "men of observation" don't miss much—they had the details before the morning was many hours old.

These Newmarket horse-watchers are not merely born philosophers, they are born humorists. They know all the dictionary words and a good many that are not in the dictionary. They "chipped" each other and they "chipped" me.

"When are you coming out again? You ought to have been here that year when we had seven inches of snow on the heath in May. It was enough to freeze a brass monkey."

Somebody told me a story about a comic start in an apprentices' race at Newmarket, when six horses bolted, some of them throwing their midget riders. One of the small "jocks," who had probably been waiting for the ride for months, possibly years, and was not likely to get another mount in public for many more moons, caught his horse with difficulty. He vaulted into the saddle again, and was thrown off. Walking ruefully after the runaway, he sniffed, remarking to the starter's assistant:

"What a —— life, sir!"

I asked Sid King how he and his colleagues managed to identify the various horses with such uncanny accuracy. They all looked alike to me, though I will admit that, once I have had a good look over an animal, I am able to recognise him again. Most horse lovers can do this; it is merely intuition. He very kindly showed me his book, in which he has the name of every horse trained at Newmarket, tabulated under each trainer's string.

I hope I am not giving away any secrets. If I am, perhaps I shall be forgiven, because I am sure that my readers will be as interested as I was when I first saw the carefully compiled little volume.

Do you remember the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's exciting story, *The Dancing Men*, in the Sherlock Holmes series? There were some illustrations of quaint-looking dancing figures, each meaning a letter of the alphabet, which when deciphered by Holmes formed a cryptic message of doom.

Well, the books compiled by the "men of observa-

tion " remind me, in a way, of those queer little " dancing men." At the side of the name of each horse there is drawn a line, about half an inch long. This line is supposed to be a horse. Above and below it are marked some strange signs—dots, dashes, crosses, etc. You might take them for shorthand notes. A cross, or star, denotes that the horse has a white blaze on its forehead. A dot above the line on the right-hand side means that he has one white stocking on the off hind leg. Below the line on the left would indicate a white stocking on the near fore.

As no two horses are marked exactly alike, the compilers of these little volumes are able to tell the names of the animals engaged in a gallop by a quick glance at the, to me, mystic designs they have drawn.

I take off my hat to the " men of observation " on Newmarket Heath. You, who see the reports in the afternoon and daily papers of the various gallops that have taken place, will now understand how carefully and systematically they are compiled. Looks easy, doesn't it ! I wouldn't have a " man of observation's " job for all the money in the Bank of England, and I'm *not* rich.

For some reason Newmarket has never been a popular venue with the small punter, though the advent of charabancs and cheap fares on the L.N.E.R. have of recent years brought more people racing there than formerly. The professional backer loves the place, and never misses a meeting, but there must still be thousands of casual race-goers who have not yet visited the headquarters of the Turf. Now, Newmarket ought to be popular. More meetings take place on its two courses than are scheduled at any of the park enclosures.

It needs a real effort on the part of the Jockey Club Stewards to bring Newmarket within the compass of the man in the street. At present there are certain races decided at Newmarket that finish so far down the course that it is difficult, even with powerful glasses, to watch the running from the stands.

Take the Cesarewitch, for instance. Here is a race that starts two and a quarter miles away from the stands. The field has gone half a mile before it is sighted, and then one only gets a momentary glance at moving objects that look, with the naked eye, to be not much bigger than blue-bottles, as they dash past a gap in the high bank which forms the "Ditch."

I suppose nine people out of ten on the stands who haven't race-glasses actually see about half a mile of the run in, say, a fifty seconds' thrill. This has set me wondering if the Cesarewitch is not as antiquated as some other things that prevail at Newmarket.

I am going to suggest to the powers that be—I trust I am not administering a shock—that the Cesarewitch should be run on a round course—*on the town side of the "Ditch."*

There are miles and miles of gallops at Newmarket, and with no alteration to the present stands on the Rowley Mile, a round or oval track could easily be constructed, a track which would cut into the straight course at any point below or above the Dewhurst Stakes starting-post. It should be possible, I think, with very little structural alterations, to form a U-shaped course over which the Cesarewitch could be run.

Tradition, I know, is a fine thing. It dies hard. But when tradition is liable to create a race of people whose eyesight has been permanently ruined because they desired to be first in the field in spotting what is leading when the Cesarewitch runners come into view, it is high time that it was scrapped.

Some of the grey-beards will raise their hands in horror at my audacity. I know that, I can hear them talking about it in the smoke-room at the —, but there, I am not going to give any Newmarket hotel a free advertisement! They will in all probability be equally emphatic that the winning-posts at the finish of the Ditch Mile and the Two-Year-Old course should be retained.

At Newmarket they have always traded on the word

"atmosphere." I used to love the expression when I first went there to report racing, but I am gradually coming to the conclusion that from the public's point of view it is the "atmosphere" that has damped public ardour in racing at Newmarket.

Racing to-day to be successful must be conducted on modern lines. Everything must necessarily move with the times, and the sooner the Jockey Club Stewards realise that their pet courses necessarily need to compete with the park tracks, the better it will be for the sport as a whole.

All the popularity that racing has lost has largely been due to lack of alacrity on the part of those most intimately concerned. They have, more or less, cultivated the idea that the masses who want to indulge in the sport will stand anything. They are now beginning to find out that they made a "bloomer" with a big "B."

Not very far from Newmarket as the crow flies is another famous training quarter—Royston. If you want to know anything about the "good old days," call in at the "North Star" and have a chat with the proprietor, Mr. William Ballard. "Bill" Ballard has been at Royston for fifty years. He came to the "North Star" about '83, and the old stables formerly in possession of "Buck" Sherrard are at the back of his premises.

"Chris" Waller was another well-known trainer and amateur rider. It is the irony of fate that a man who had fearlessly ridden in the Grand National should have been killed in a motor smash. "Chris" Waller met this fate near Royston.

When I was last at the "North Star" "Bill" Ballard asked me if I remembered E. J. Percy, who also had horses at Royston. I told him I did, but "Buck" Sherrard started training long before my time, though I have particularly pleasing recollections of his winning the Ascot Stakes with Scullion. Speaking from memory, his own colours were yellow, black cap.

Sherrard was connected for many years with the late Sir George Chetwynd, who took action against Lord Durham because the latter had in a Gimcrack dinner speech accused Sir George of having his horses "pulled." The Chetwynd-Durham case will always be famous in Turf history.

It was heard in the Law Courts and occupied several days, Sir George Chetwynd eventually gaining the verdict. "Bill" Ballard told me of the interest the action created in Royston and district. Sir Charles Russell, afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen, appeared for the defence, and practically every Turf notability of the period turned up in court to hear the evidence. There was portly Sir John Astley ("The Mate"), Lord Hardwicke, Sam Lewis, the famous money-lender, whom the gamblers voted their best friend; Tommy Hughes, who used to win Chester Cups; Lord Lurgan; and scores of others, whose names are now forgotten. "Jubilee" Benzon was decked out with a buttonhole as large as a cabbage.

Charlie Wood, the famous jockey, who is still alive and residing on the South Coast, was a witness for the plaintiff. I am assured that Charlie caused much amusement in court by the easy off-hand way in which he answered Sir Charles Russell's conundrums.

It was rather rough on "Buck" Sherrard and Charlie Wood. They were really afforded no opportunity of defending themselves. Sherrard was given a terrible shaking by Charles Matthews as to the running of his horses, but the evidence of Sir George Chetwynd must have impressed the Jockey Club Stewards.

Sir George said quite frankly that it was no business of his if the bookmakers chose to offer 100 to 1 against his horses when they lost; neither could he help it if the same horses subsequently won at short prices later on. If he had a "lump" on his horses when they came off, so much the better for him. Racing, he affirmed, was not an exact science, and if a man's winnings ever exceeded his losses he could consider himself fortunate.

Betting books were produced in court, and every phase of the case was probed to the bottom. And in the end Sir George Chetwynd was vindicated—to the extent of a farthing damages.

Cock-fighting, according to “Bill” Ballard, was a great sport round about those parts in the “good old days.” He asked me if I had ever seen a cock-fight. I winked the other eye, and we talked about pit bull-terriers and many things.

Why should I give myself away by telling Bill that I had witnessed a cock-fight not many miles away from the site of the “North Star”? He knows as well as I do that cock-fighting is an illegal sport.

CHAPTER XV

SOMETHING ABOUT STEEPLECHASING—CHELTENHAM, MECCA OF THE
SPORT—TRAINERS AND RIDERS OF THE WESTERN TOWN—WHEN
ADAM LINDSAY GORDON KNOCKED OUT THE "PRO"—FINDING
A "MUG"—PITY THE POOR OLD PLATER

STEEPLECHASING is a great game. It is a game for the small owner as well as the man who can sink £15,000 in the purchase of four or five horses, with the possible chance of getting a Grand National aspirant thrown in for his outlay. The trouble is that the rich owner for some reason fights shy of National Hunt racing. Many have dabbled in it, but they don't stick. Some put horses that have disappointed them on the flat to hurdling, the idea being that jumping gives a timid animal courage, and takes the vice out of those with a kink. As a matter of fact, nine times out of ten it does nothing of the sort.

If a horse does not like racing on the flat he is not going to be coaxed to jump over timber. Of course, I have heard of some of these so-called "reformed characters"—there are exceptions to every rule—but the real rogue will still be a rogue whether you put him between the shafts of a milk-cart or try to persuade him that hopping over eight flights two or three times a week is a holiday on the sands.

More often than not the wrong horses are put to jumping and some unfortunate jockey suffers a nasty purler because he is plucky enough to get up on a mad brute he has never seen before. Many horses that have not been over an obstacle are natural jumpers. The majority can be schooled to perfection by clever trainers.

I have always had an idea that a wonder horse might be acquired by an owner who had the courage not to run a promising animal in public until he was four years of age. He would be broken in as a yearling, trained on the trial gallops as a two-year-old, and in his third year schooled over a few flights of hurdles. A month or two of practice should perfect him for the bigger obstacles ; then in his fourth year he might be given a test in public in a novices' steeplechase.

From the raw material treated in this manner one might conceivably develop another Lutteur III, an animal capable of winning the Grand National as a five-year-old. But, of course, it is only a wealthy enthusiast of 'chasing who could afford the time and the money to court a possible failure in the end.

Nearly all the hurdlers and 'chasers we see out during the National Hunt season are recruited from flat racing. Very few good horses over jumps have not run on the flat at some period in their career.

Year after year something to this effect is trotted out by writers who naturally wish to do their best to boost jumping :

“ I hear that several owners have decided to put better-class horses to hurdling. There is every reason to believe that the sport will get an additional fillip this season.”

By the time January has dawned and gone, and thoughts of Lincoln are in the air, we are still waiting for the appearance of the better-class horses.

You can take it from me that under present conditions, when jumping is merely looked upon as a stop-gap, the better-class horse never will be put to the game. The prizes to be won are far too small to make it worth the candle. There is no real incentive for a wealthy owner to patronise National Hunt sport. There is no real incentive for a trainer to confine his attentions exclusively to hurdlers and 'chasers, though such past-masters in the art of training cross-country horses as Ivor and Owen Anthony, Percy Woodland,

Stanley and David Harrison and one or two others do devote most of their time to the business.

In France steeplechasing is carried on under far better conditions than it is in this country. Every owner is interested in winter racing. That is why some of the best 'chasers in the world are trained across the Channel.

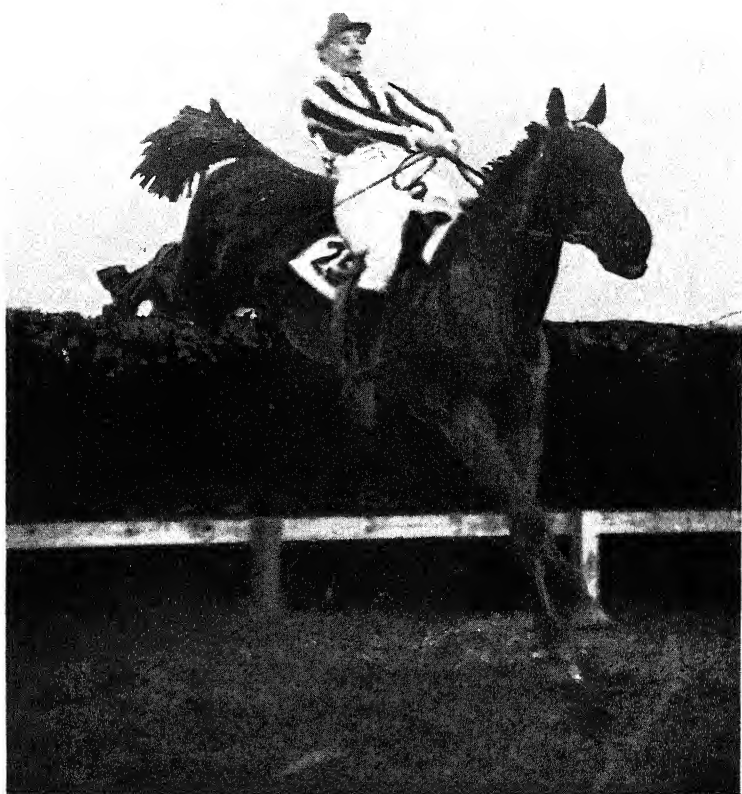
In Australia they also cater for the owner keen on steeplechasing better than they do here. There are big prizes to be won, and big prizes mean added enthusiasm and bigger attendances. I just forget how many thousand-pound hurdle races and steeplechases there were to be won in England a few years ago, but they are not offered now. Such races as the Victory 'Chase and Victory Hurdle at Manchester have been dropped in value, a Gatwick hurdle handicap has been reduced to less than half its original monetary value, and now Sandown Park, Liverpool, Gatwick and Cheltenham are practically the only meetings that have "thousand-pounders."

Cheltenham is an example of what can be done to arouse public interest in National Hunt sport. It is *the* jumping fixture *de luxe*. Messrs. Pratt, who control Cheltenham, leave no stone unturned in their endeavours to cater for the casual race-goer at the National Hunt festival, and I don't think their enterprise has resulted in failure.

Sandown, I think, could do likewise, so could Manchester, and probably Newbury and Kempton. Liverpool I omit for the reason that the Grand National will always be one of the greatest attractions of the whole year, holding, as it does, pride of place with the Derby and the St. Leger.

But to put the ginger into 'chasing it must be given publicity. It is only of recent years that race-course companies have taken the slightest interest in advertising. Hitherto they did not even think it necessary to call public attention to the sport they provided.

A few "double crown" posters on the railway hoardings, a few handbills, which were not distributed



JERRY M.

“The best Grand National Hero I ever saw”—Author.

in the right way, and the job was done. Oh, yes, and an occasional three-inch advertisement in the sporting Press. I forgot that.

I still meet people who imagine that jumping is the greatest "ramp" under the sun. Mud has been slung at the sport of 'chasing in all directions, and a lot of it has clung. Mud always will cling if some obliging person does not go out of his way to rub it off. Sometimes he soils his hands in the effort, makes many enemies, and I question whether he gets even the "k" out of kudos.

It is up to the race-course companies and the National Hunt Stewards to put their house in order. Indeed, I ought to have named the stewards first, for the lead must come from them. The public will rally to a good thing if it is a good thing. At present they don't believe it is. Hence I have to point out the moral of Cheltenham.

Cheltenham is the soul of steeplechasing. Cheltenham is the strength of steeplechasing. Cheltenham should be the maker of steeplechasing. Cheltenham should be the maker of steeplechasing because the sport provided at the National Hunt fixtures at Prestbury Park is the best of the whole year. Why people who could go to Cheltenham stop away beats me, but they do.

The paddock, on the afternoon of the National Hunt 'Chase—four miles over a stiffish country, amateur riders on hunters, who relish the task as though they were in the wake of the fox—is a sight for the gods. There is nothing more taking to the eye on a fine March day than that long, stately row of white stands against the background of the Cotswolds, oft tipped golden by the rays of the setting sun.

No, a man does not go racing to admire the scenery, but, not being entirely mercenary, I would far sooner make my bets amid pleasant surroundings than from the lid of a dustbin. If nothing else matters than L.S.D., I must apologise for the digression and say, not meaning to be impertinent, why read on?

I love Cheltenham and its environment. The country-side for miles around breathes sport. If you fish, if you shoot, if you hunt, if you box, if you play cricket or bowls, or even obtain some meed from the pleasure of whizzing a dart, you will be as welcome as the flowers in May.

In the local inns you can talk horses until the landlord says, pleasantly : " Gentlemen, it's time we were all in bed," and long before that you will have culled enough reminiscences of old racing days to fill a book.

Though I cannot go back to the time of George Stevens (nineteen rides in the Grand National, five wins, without a fall), Tom Oliver, Chapman, " Fog " Rowlands and Fred Archer, Cheltenham has always been famous for notabilities in sport who were born and bred in the shire.

When I first knew Cheltenham, Alfred Holman, who died in 1927, was living at Prestbury Cottage, and had his stables in the middle of the present race-course. Alfred was a great trainer of jumpers, a son of William Holman, trainer of The Colonel and Freetrader when they won the Grand National. William was brother to George Holman, who was second on The Doctor at Aintree. What a family, with steeplechasing traditions back into the Dark Ages.

Alfred Holman did a bit of riding as well, but if memory serves me rightly he had a bad smash, after which he took up training, and at one time had charge of the horses of Mr. Studd, a rich indigo planter, who won the " National " with Salamander. Later in life Mr. Studd turned very religious. He joined Moody and Sankey, the revivalists, and eventually left all his money to this body.

Jack Goodwin, a marvel in his day over a country, was at Cheltenham about this time. Jack afterwards became a fine showman in the hack ring, performing feats of jumping that would tax the pluck and powers of a circus performer.

Among the younger generation was " Gratty " Blaggrave, father of the present Beckhampton trainer,

Frank Burroughs, whose daughter, now deceased, married Fred Pratt. On top of Cleeve Hill Jack Rogers trained. He had Buckaway II, third to Kirkland in the "National," and also Nahillah, a runner in Moifaa's year.

I forget how long I have known Alf Newey, who is now training at Cheltenham, but it was before he rode Stanley Howard's Eremon to victory at Liverpool. Newey was also the rider of Buckaway II. A great jockey in his time, fearless as they make 'em. Never tell Newey that the jumps at Aintree are an unfair test for an animal that has been properly schooled. He'll laugh at you.

Another Cheltenham notability was Arthur Wood, better known as "Stosher." He rode Nahillah, belonging to Morgan Crowther, a Cardiff bookmaker. Going Andoversford way there was Herbert Sidney, the amateur rider, who was killed at Wolverhampton, and his partner, Herbert Brandon, while at Prestbury was Tom Spiers, a brother to the late Sir Edward Hulton's manager, and Billy Villar.

Somewhere about the town one was certain to run across Nat Cuthbertson, Bob Apperley, Lucy and occasionally Owen Anthony and the late Aubrey Hastings, trainer and rider of that wonderful 'chaser, Ascetic's Silver. Sportsmen all! Cheltenham was their Mecca. They knew the old race-course as one of the greatest places in the country.

Everybody could tell you the points of a horse on sight. Jumpers for preference, of course, but they could train 'em on the flat as well, especially portly Teddy Weaver at nearby Bourton-on-the-Hill, when they said of the trainer of Veracity, winner of the Cambridgeshire, that he'd eaten half a flock of the sheep he reared in his own pastures.

Dick Burge, one of the greatest light-weight boxers who ever donned the "mits," was born at Cheltenham in 1865. It may not be generally known that Dick first started life as a "ped." He was as "hot" on the cinder path as he was in the ring. Then there

was Jem Edwards, an undefeated champion. Jem taught Adam Lindsay Gordon all he knew about boxing.

I have heard folks say—critical folks—that Adam Lindsay Gordon was not a poet, but a rhymester. My hat! Was he? Every line he wrote breathed of the open air and sport. I treasure the volumes in my library with his name on each fly-leaf as I shall never treasure many of the so-called masters.

One night, boxing with Jem Edwards, in a hostelry where Jem was teaching young gentlemen how to use their "fistes," Adam Lindsay Gordon let himself go with a vengeance, and Jem went down and out.

Dick Wainwright, who used to fight Jem, always declared that Cheltenham was the finest spot on earth. When he was nearly eighty Wainwright knocked about the West End of London, and if there was a fight on he would be in the thick of it.

Cheltenham has never been a favourite resort of professional backers. If you ask them why they will tell you that the majority of the events in the day's programme are too open. When the devil habitually drives with funny results it's a case of "needs must." The motto of the "pro" punter at Prestbury Park is "play light." Bill Smith and Bradley were two prominent members of the fraternity in the "roaring 'nineties." They may not have been on a par with "Ready Money" Riley, "Jubilee" Benson and Jack Hammond, but they were fearless when they thought they knew something.

I am indebted to my old friend, Adair Dighton, "The Special Commissioner" of the *Sporting Life*, for an anecdote of the days when he was a boy at Cheltenham College. He and two other bright lads made a book at the risk of being "warned off," or rather expelled by the "head." Making a book on the Q.T. at the college was "money for jam." They stood the bets for the "stumers" and laid off the "likelys" with local commission agents.

Apparently the cat was out of the bag on the day

Paddy won the Great Metropolitan. There was a rush from the college after chapel for the early edition of the local paper, and the powers that were sat up and took notice.

"And," says Adair Dighton, "our interview with the headmaster was prolonged and painful. Unfortunately for us the 'head's' sense of humour only developed after he left Cheltenham. In one of his 'general knowledge' papers out came the question: 'Who rode Bucephalus?' and being, as I thought, bright, I remembered that a horse of this name had won the week before. Down it went. 'Won Grand Stand Stakes (1½ mile). Wolverhampton, Walls rode, seven ran, won easily, giving 21 lb., etc. etc.' Honestly I thought I should get a scholarship, but instead I got a hiding, and—he could hit!"

A lot of people think it is easy to make money at the jumping game. Is it? The cheering prospect of something turning up is no more likely to materialise when your "stuff" is "in the air" than when you take 6 to 4 about a two-year-old in a field of twenty-five at Ascot. Indeed, I'd be "on" the youngster for pref., for they do send some "cast-iron" certs to the post on the Royal heath.

Gambling on "gees" is all much of a muchness to any other form of gambling. Life's a gamble for that matter. A duke may be a duke, but he mightn't have been if one of his devilishly fortunate forebears hadn't married a commoner who chanced to own land that was subsequently developed into an estate upon which palatial mansions were built.

At the jumping game there is one thing dead certain. You can't make two and two into five, but if you back good horses—horses who can jump and go a bit of a bat when they are tackled between the last two obstacles—you won't lose a "packet" if you keep your head.

Tip-top 'chasers and hurdlers don't grow on cherry trees; they have to be born and bred, then trained with all the skill of the trainer's art. Just as backers

think it is easy to "tickle up" the layers in the ring, so do trainers think that anybody can train a jumper.

It is more difficult to bring a jumper to perfection than it is to "touch" me for half a crown. Those trainers who "mix it" by having charge of steeplechasers and flat racers, working all the year round, as it were, seldom do so well as the specialists in jumping, though there are exceptions. Owners who "mix it" also don't own the best horses, but again there are exceptions, *à la* Lord Woolavington.

When I first went out racing the Irish horses formed the backbone of National Hunt sport. Most of the best steeplechasers came from the Emerald Isle, even if they made the hurdlers over here. Nowadays fewer Irish animals of the right jumping strain are imported to English stables. The tax is the main objection.

There is a restricted market, and Irish breeders know it. When they do get a good horse they naturally want a high price for it. With all the attendant risks of steeplechasing English owners won't, or cannot afford to, pay the money. And, seeing how many great Irish horses have met with fatal mishaps, it requires some pluck to take the risk of paying £5000 for a potential Grand National winner.

I shall always maintain that the cleverest trainer in the world cannot make a habit of turning out a crack fencer from a horse that has been trained for, say, three or four years on the flat. Donzelon is the most noted exception I can think of at the moment. He goes to prove the rule.

Many of the best hurdlers were failures on the flat. The reason is found in my contention that they were natural jumpers in the first place, only their trainers did not know it.

If horses could speak I think they would make no bones about saying that they much preferred to stand at a manger or roam the meadows at will rather than engage in the pursuit of jumping obstacles. The average hunter, however, loves the 'chase, and will

instantly prick his ears at the "Tally-ho!" anxious to be into the thick of the fray.

Steeplechasing is a different matter. Some horses like it, but others hate the sight of a fence, and a bad fall knocks all the stuffing out of them. Many horses were killed at jumping in 1932 and 1933. Such things are a tragedy to sport. It is all right to say that it is all in the game, but there is the point of humanity to consider. I am sure that many fatal accidents are caused by horses being insufficiently schooled.

It seems to be the practice of some trainers to saddle animals that don't know what they actually have to do. There is a mix-up owing to a horse refusing at an obstacle, and two or three others are involved. The bad jumper is a menace to every other horse in the field, and jockeys risk their lives when they take a mount on these jumping novices.

I am very glad to know that in France the Stewards are granted wider powers, which enables them to take up cases where inadequately schooled horses are run in jumping events. It is a fine idea, and ought to be encouraged.

Trainers who know their business would be horrified at the idea of running an animal that could not jump properly, but there are others who don't mind giving their charges a bit of practice in public. It is all wrong.

What is done in France should be done here. I hope the National Hunt Stewards will think fit to copy the example. Too many unfit animals are exploited day after day, and I am sure that fewer accidents will occur now that trainers have been warned that they cannot do this sort of thing. It is no advertisement for steeplechasing when a horse meets with a fatal accident. I don't say that it always happens that the animal involved has been asked to do something beyond his power, but very often that is the case.

If horses are not to be considered I submit that it is up to the powers that be to safeguard the jockeys. They are plucky beggars these jumping "jocks" and

they don't make a fortune out of the game. Also the majority I know are downright good sports. They hate the idea that their mount may come a purler and break a leg or a fetlock. Yet it often happens that they are compelled to take a ride with the full knowledge that it will be touch and go whether the animal they are astride will get safely over the first obstacle.

Training horses is a wonderful game. I have often thought I should like to take it up seriously myself. The only horse I tried to train was in France during the war, when we were resting behind the lines, and some of the officers organised a sports meeting.

I had a black mare, Bess, whom I had procured from a remounts' squadron at Frevent, near St. Pol. I really got her for my "skipper," and rode her back to camp, a distance of twenty-odd kilometres, but she was a bit too fresh for him, so, unofficially, I collared her myself and put her on our "strength" for rations. There was a bit of blood in her. She could jump ditches and fences, but hated the sight of timber. I rode her in a hurdle race and she came purler at the second obstacle, nearly breaking her neck.

I never knew a mare with more "nous." One day she took fright outside our camp when a "Jerry" plane came over and dropped a bomb, and I couldn't hold her for nuts. She jumped a gate, dashed between a row of huts, past the orderly-room and, suddenly stopping dead, deposited me over her head through the open door of the sergeants' mess.

That mare seldom made a mistake. If I had had two stripes at the time instead of three, I am sure she would have made me kiss the sawdust on the floor of the corporals' mess.

When I was living in Epsom two young acquaintances of mine persuaded a "mug" with more money than brains to allow them to buy him a couple of horses to be "trained private." The horses were duly bought, stabled at a "pub" I admit having been seen in, and each morning they were supposed to go up to the Downs to do their "stuff." As the owner

never came to inspect them, and the joint trainers were not habitually inclined to rise before something after nine o'clock, the actual work the animals did was about one and a half gallops a week round a field not much bigger than a backyard in Limehouse.

They were entered for several races at Hurst Park and other nearby courses, but I don't remember that they were ever sent to the meetings, let alone sported silk. What I do know is that the owner dubbed up the training fees as regular as clockwork. He also handed over to his two "trainers" money for their charge's keep and other incidental expenses, which was nice, for it enabled these bright young sparks to go "punting" in the silver rings.

After this state of affairs had existed for a matter of three or four months one of the "trainers" said to me :

"Here's a pretty fine lark. What do you think, the old buffer (he didn't say "buffer") came along this afternoon and had the — cheek to tell us that he's going to sell his two (fancy named) 'skins,' and just as we've got 'em fit. Says he cannot afford to keep horses in training if they never run. I'm a good mind to sue him for breach of contract, only Bill thinks we might have a job to prove our case."

I knew Bill. He could tell quicker than anyone living when he'd backed a loser.

Partly because of infirmities in wind, limb and eye the selling 'chaser is labelled as dregs in the racing game. He travels about the country, running two or three times a week perchance at small meetings and is flogged home by well-meaning jockeys in an endeavour to land the "corn." Goodness only knows how many owners some of these old fellows have in the course of a year or two. In their time they carry sufficient variety of colours to make up a goodly-sized rainbow, but it is seldom that their efforts at doing their job bring them the admiration accorded to the rainbow.

Thank goodness some owners do appreciate their

old servants and pension them off before they have come up for the last round. There are old horses to-day roaming the home pastures on some farm, where a kindly master has placed them to end their days, but the majority of owners do not seem to give much thought as to what happens to the animals who once carried their colours. Out of one sale ring they go into another, racing for months on end, with no thought of a close season save that which is scheduled in the "Racing Calendar."

Strenuous work is bound to have its effect sooner or later. The inevitable break-down comes if these "decrepits" go on long enough. There is an old racing saying that "horses are not machines." As a rule it is applied by humorous gentry when they want to excuse in-and-out running, but take it in its literal sense and you'll tumble to what I am driving at. Most owners of platers give no consideration to wear and tear.

I am sure to get a bit warm under the collar when anybody runs down the poor old 'chaser. I suppose it is because, as a lover of horses, I hold just as high appreciation of the worn-out old fellow who pulls the milk-cart as I do of the Cup four-year-old, who makes us cheer like Billy-ho on Ascot Heath.

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CHAPTER XVI

SOME SIDELIGHTS ON RACING OFFICIALS—THE JUDGE, THE
HANDICAPPER AND THE CLERK OF THE COURSE

“DON’T throw any brickbats ; I do my best ” might well be the motto on the note-paper of every racing judge. There is no doubt that the “ man in the box ” has a task fraught with many pitfalls. His decisions are criticised by every Tom, Dick and Harry, and when there is a close finish of heads—the sort of finish which old-time writers used to describe in this way : “ A blanket would have covered the first five ”—somebody, probably speaking through his pocket, declares :

“ The blinkin’ judge ought to be boiled ! ”

I have occasionally judged amateur boxing and athletic events, so I know how the views of experts can differ. All the same, I am certain in my own mind that racing judges do make mistakes. Numerous cases crop up during the course of a season on the flat, when their verdicts do not agree with those of onlookers situated in positions where one would think that a perfect view of the finish could be obtained.

At such places as Windsor, Kempton, Gatwick and, say, Newmarket, where the angles admittedly are deceptive, I should never think of criticising the official decision, but there have been instances of doubtful verdicts on other tracks, and it seems to me that the Jockey Club Stewards will have no option but to look into the whole matter from a practical point of view.

I have always maintained that the position of the judge’s box on most tracks is wrong. It ought to be

placed much farther back from the rails, and elevated so that the official can look down on the field as a medley of colours flashes past the "stick."

I have heard some of my friends in the Press-box declare that nobody ought to question the judge's verdict. I have seen it written that he is the only person competent to give an impartial opinion. I do not agree.

Boxing referees are criticised, football "refs" are called all the pretty names that disgruntled spectators can pronounce when a doubtful free kick is given, and many a cricket umpire has been "barracked" for "no-balling" a player for a perfectly fair delivery. "The King can do no wrong." I like the phrase. It has been handed down from generation to generation. All the same, it has little substance in fact. History tells us that there have been many kings who were seldom right in their decisions on vital points.

Jockeys, proverbially, are poor tipsters, but I give them credit for knowing when they have won, or when the verdict has gone against them. In the close race, with horses finishing far away from one another, I admit that a jockey cannot tell whether he has been beaten a head or got home by a neck. It would be absurd to think otherwise, but when two animals run home locked together I would just as soon bank upon what a jockey such as Harry Wragg, Joe Childs or Steve Donoghue said as the judge.

It is not often that any jockey criticises the judge's verdict, at least not openly. He would be unsportsmanlike if he did. He can, however, have an opinion, and some of the jockeys' opinions I have listened to have been rather vitriolic.

During the course of a lengthy experience I have seen several horses win under the judge's box. They have not even been placed by the official. In my own mind I am absolutely sure that judges have erred. I am not going to advocate that a judge's verdict should be reversed. That would be unthinkable. What he says is rightfully law, and everybody abides by it.

Judges have changed their minds when palpable errors of mistaken colours have been brought to their notice. It is very easy to mistake colours, and you don't need to be colour-blind to do it. Racing colours in this country are so complicated that I often wonder more mistakes are not made by the men in the box.

Some of the cleverest race-readers on the Press-stand err when describing the running to a colleague who is taking notes as fast as he can write. They do this when the field is a quarter of a mile away from the winning-post, so you can well pity the man in the box who has to say what has won when half a dozen or more horses are fighting out a desperate finish.

There may be two on the far side running neck and neck, one in the centre and three or four under the rails. The judge gives his verdict on colours, not saddle-cloth numbers, which he doesn't see. He has to make a quick decision, and instinct, based on experience, tells him in a flash what has won and what is second and third.

Try and memorise the jackets of a few owners whose colours are not very distinctive. You know, hoops and chevrons, quartered caps, etc.—and if you are not tied up in knots, I'm a Dutchman. A judge has to memorise hundreds of racing jackets. The black, white cap, of Lord Derby is a distinctive colour. So is the black, scarlet cap, of Mr. Jack Joel, and the all lilac of Mrs. Arthur James.

These liveries are seen out frequently and one gets accustomed to them, but many owners only run their horses a dozen times in a season. That is what helps to make the judge's task so difficult.

Among my many racing friends is a man who once possessed an uncanny knack of digging out a "blot" in a handicap. I say "once" for the reason that he has practically retired from the Turf. He now devotes his declining years to teaching Minorcas to lay bigger eggs than his neighbour's fowls "somewhere in the Cotswolds."

When I saw him last he was lamenting the fact that

most of the cute trainers who sat up far into the night, cogitating on ways and means of hoodwinking the handicappers with horses they had consistently run down the course, had thrown in their hands.

"You see," he said, "they could never put one over that fellow Dawkins, and most of the other gents who work for the Jockey Club are equally as smart. To get a stone in hand now is an impossibility, not if you kept the horse three years."

As Mr. Dawkins had retired from his job as handicapper I am left wondering whether some of those merchants gifted in the art of jiggery-pokery will think it worth while to return to the scenes of their former triumphs. I am not out to throw bouquets, but I suppose there never has been a better handicapper than Mr. T. F. Dawkins. He possesses all the courage of the late Admiral Rous without any of the Admiral's prejudices.

Admiral Rous always thought that owners and trainers were "diddling" him as cleverly as the three-card tricksters "diddle" their victims in the race-trains, but I would never have accused Mr. Dawkins of harbouring suspicion. He based his handicaps on what he saw with his own eyes, and what he heard from other handicappers. He made allowances for all sorts of things that the ordinary race-goer does not bring into his calculations. Many's the time I've tried to find a flaw in his work, but the result has generally proved him right and me wrong.

Perhaps you have noticed that French owners have practically given up trying to win our big handicaps. They used to have a cut in every year, but their recent efforts to "slip in a sly one" have not met with much success. Tapin certainly won on the Carholme with 10 lb. in hand, while Sir Gallahad III could conceivably have carried to victory 7 lb. more than his allotted 8 st. 5 lb.; but I doubt whether our neighbours across the Channel will ever put over another Ob, or a Brambilla, or an Epinard.

At one time our handicappers were prone to con-

sistently underrate the ability of foreign horses. Now they don't take any risks.

Any trainer who can beat the handicapper by legitimate means is entitled to all the kudos. Some horses improve out of all knowledge in the course of a few weeks, and because they stroll home with the proverbial "ton" in hand it does not necessarily mean that they have been cheating in their previous efforts.

I know that some of you will laugh at this. Everybody who backs horses, however, is inclined to suspect his best friend. There is no place like a race-course for magnifying an accidental event or some minor occurrence into an actuality. The rumour is passed from mouth to mouth, and even the man who invented it begins to believe that he has coughed up a solid fact.

Where trainers do try to throw dust in the eyes of the handicappers is when they run horses in an unfit state, or over a course either too short or too far. There have been instances when they have been reprimanded by local stewards for such practices, and I certainly think that a trainer who deliberately saddles a palpably unready horse should be heavily fined.

We expect to find "fat" horses out at Lincoln and Liverpool, but not when the racing season is three months old. I am afraid, however, that quite a number of unfit animals are sent out in June and July, and some even in August. But don't imagine for one moment that the handicappers are unaware of the fact.

An official handicapper is appointed by the Jockey Club Stewards to attend each race-meeting. He takes note of every horse that runs, and I guess, though he may not say things he could say, he is not blind to facts. He sees a lot of things that find expression of his opinion in the handicaps he frames.

You may wonder why certain horses are kept at the top of the handicaps. There is a very sound reason. At some period they have shown form which warrants a high weight. Until the handicapper is convinced

they have deteriorated they are seldom "dropped." And this is the way it should be done in fairness to the consistent animal. I am sure that every handicapper has a lot of sympathy for those horses who always run second and third. When he can justifiably drop them a pound or two he does so. They deserve leniency because they are always trying.

Handicapping is a difficult job. It requires imagination. The main factor in racing is luck, and day after day the careful observer could fill a book with hard-luck stories. Handicappers take note of many of these incidents in running, and I shall always maintain that they ought to be better placed, so that they can observe all the queer things which occur during the course of a race.

On every race-track there should be "crows' nests" placed at advantageous points. I should like to see two handicappers attending every meeting, one to be stationed some way down the course. They do their work very well as things are, but I am sure they would do it better if they could observe everything that happens from the time the barrier goes up to the time the winner and placed horses have passed the post.

Clerks of courses are the most optimistic gentlemen I have ever come across. Like backers of horses, they are always hoping for the best while fearing the worst. In the winter they will send out reassuring messages to the Press Association and the other agencies that circulate sporting news. There have been times when their reports that "racing is practically certain" were so soul-inspiring that race-goers paid their fares to the meetings, and arrived on the courses to find that somebody had blundered, in omitting to advise the railway company at the departure station in time that racing had been postponed, or abandoned owing to frost or flood.

Possibly local stewards are not always early risers, but I think if I were acting in this official capacity, and believed my meeting was in jeopardy owing to climatic conditions, I should make it my business to

rise with the lark, and take a squint at the state of the course by half-past eight in the morning.

In these days of telephones and wireless it ought to be possible to advise practically everybody concerned, in time to prevent them spending money unnecessarily in fares, or using up petrol. However, this is rather beside the point I want to outline. What I wish to emphasise is this: A working arrangement for the automatic transference of fixtures should not be a wild dream.

A stoppage of racing during the winter months is always bad for everybody concerned. When there is a lengthy hold-up, privation and hardship to thousands is bound to ensue, for racing is their livelihood. I refer particularly to gate-keepers, tic-tac men, book-makers' runners and the hundred and one race-course employees. It is rather rough on them to be out of work, if only for a few days, for no work means no pay.

I think that there are times when racing fixtures could be transferred. I commend the suggestion to the National Hunt Stewards, and to every clerk of the course in the country.

Racing has been termed *the* national sport, but it will never be properly carried out in this country until clerks of courses realise that it must be made a family recreation, and popular prices charged. Interest in sport, generally, is now so pronounced that there must be many thousands of racing enthusiasts who would willingly take their families to a race-course, if the expense of the outing was within their means and they could be sure of finding fitting accommodation.

As it is, apart from the few big "open" meetings at Ascot, Epsom and Goodwood, family participation in racing is largely confined to those having the entry to the club lawn.

Since the Totalisator was installed on race-tracks the attendance of women has greatly increased. Some of the "park" meetings have specially catered for them by making a reduction to the principal enclosure, but, believe me, they have not gone far enough. I

have no complaint about the provision that is made for the fair sex in Tattersalls, but what about the minor enclosures? With the exception of one or two meetings, which I do not propose to name, they have to rough it. This they will not do, and consequently they stop away.

Don't imagine that I am proposing to make racing a garden party. I am after revenue for the race-course companies, so that the sport may be kept at the pinnacle instead of descending to the slough.

It should be possible to provide graduated accommodation—good seating, better covered stands—for the purely pleasure-seeking community. And if the prices of admission were proportionate to those charged at other entertainments, I am sure that in the course of time we should hear no more about this bugbear of falling attendances.

CHAPTER XVII

WHICH SHOWS THAT WOMEN ARE LUCKY AT RACING

IN the preceding chapter I mentioned that a lot of women nowadays are going racing. Well, I suppose the average woman, who makes a practice of indulging in the sport two or three days a week, is far more careful than the average man. She does not throw several shillings away by travelling first class when third will do, and she is far more inclined to partake of a light meal at a teashop before the train departs than "weigh out" four or five "bob" for a race-course lunch.

If she is accompanied by a female friend, as is often the case, one race-card does for the two. If she can bet "outside" she is not going to pay a lot of money to go in the rings, which at places such as Epsom, Kempton, Sandown and Hurst Park is pretty sound logic.

Here's another point she scores: When she has backed the first winner, and the bookmaker's notes are in her handbag, you can bet all England to a hazelnut that she does not come away a loser on the day.

Most men who back the first winner say:

"This is my lucky day. I'm going right through the card."

They do, but the wrong way through it. By the time the third event has been decided the "bunce" pouched on the first event has been dissipated. Another loser follows, and then we have the same old tale of woe—the "getting-out stakes." Instead of getting "out", they get farther "in."

How many times have you won four or five pounds

on the first race and finished well "down" on the day? I wonder. I have done it myself, so I know.

Now, a woman would not do it. She would make certain of keeping enough to buy something. As I have said, her actual expenses are light. If she bets on the Tote she can back six losers, and the outing will have cost her a pound. But no woman ever does back six losers. At any rate that is my experience. If she did she wouldn't go racing for a month.

Personally, I have never troubled to tot up my year's racing expenses. If I did I am sure I should be appalled. You're "weighing out" here, "weighing out" there, and a pound a day goes nowhere.

Racing men are habitually open-hearted. They throw away a lot of money which they might keep in their pockets. Rounds of drinks, with one for Kitty, who stands behind the bar. Odd shillings to beggars and half-dollars to race-course hangers-on who "touch" them *en route* with a hard-luck tale.

Of this rash expenditure I am occasionally reminded when it so happens that I inadvertently leave my bank pass-book on the corner of the bookcase at home. My wife, in her natural anxiety for my welfare, has taken a sly peep. When I get home she mentions after supper, apropos of nothing:

"Who is this Mr. Self, dear? You seem to have paid him a lot of cheques lately. I do hope he is not a bookmaker."

Of course, I endeavour to point out that "Mr. Self" is really a very decent fellow, who has certain expenses to meet. I explain that he cannot go racing without money; that he needs to satisfy the inner man; that he sometimes gets thirsty and has pals to meet after he has been racing. Also I explain that he likes a cigar after lunch, and cannot always be cadging smokes from his friends. In fact, I do the best I can to put "Mr. Self" right in the eyes of my better half. I am afraid it sounds unconvincing to a woman, but it is all too true. I wish that it were otherwise. I hate making out cheques to "Self." I would much rather

make 'em out to a bookmaker, even if he did not sometimes send me one in return, because I know that bookmakers have families to keep, and it costs them far too much in entry fees to race-courses in this, their commendable endeavour to compete with the Tote.

I am not joking. Four pounds per day per man is a bit steep. I think it is time that every race-course company did something for the bookmaker. Much as I welcome the Tote, I would like to see bookmakers treated fairly. In mentioning the figure above I am, of course, alluding to the layer who pays to bet in 'Tattersalls' ring, but the charges made to bookmakers and their clerks in the smaller enclosures are equally high.

To-day bookmaking is not what it used to be. Many of the smaller layers are struggling to make ends meet. I don't know what is the real cause of the "slump," but I am sure that the older generation of race-goers are losing interest in the sport. I am not suggesting that they habitually stop away from the meetings, but they certainly show less inclination to go out racing than was the case a few years ago.

But I am digressing. I started off to tell something about women who go to the meetings. I have come to the conclusion that they are more fortunate than men. If I am not mistaken, one of the biggest Tote wins ever brought off in this country went to a woman at one of the Midland meetings.

Most women do amazing things when they start to speculate. I have often watched them in the casinos at Dieppe, Ostend and other Continental resorts, and have marvelled at their methods of staking. On a race-course, too, they often seem to win.

At a meeting at Wolverhampton I saw an elderly woman take £30 to £5 about a certain horse. She booked another bet at the same odds to a "tenner" about the same horse with another layer. I was so intrigued that I followed her. These two wagers were made on credit, but suddenly she opened her

hand-bag and thrust five £1 notes into a bookmaker's hand, saying :

"Thirty-five pounds to five." Again it was the same horse she backed.

As she then took up a position on the stand I thought she had finished betting, but all at once she rushed up to another bookmaker and took £100 to £10 about another horse. The first horse won the race by a short head from the last horse she had backed.

I am not naturally curious, but I wondered who she was. I asked one of the layers with whom she had betted, and he told me she was just an ordinary punter, not connected with any stable, not even the wife, sister, or daughter of a trainer, or an owner.

"She will often have twenty or thirty pounds on a horse," he said. "She seldom has a losing week with me, and I always 'cover' her bets."

She was certainly lucky that day, for I saw her back two other winners during the course of the afternoon.

At Gatwick in 1930, I got on a winner at long odds owing to having observed a woman take £80 to £4 about a horse trained by "Atty" Persse. If it was good enough for her it struck me that £40 to £2 would be good enough for me. The horse came with a rush in the market just after the late Walter Beresford had laid me my bet. It started at, I think, 4 to 1, and trotted home.

Some of the funny merchants declare that women pick their winners out with a pin, but I don't believe it. Pins were made for winkles. They certainly used to spend their odd farthings in pins when they bought a bit of ribbon at 1s. 11³/₄d. per yard, but the drapers have, I am told, stopped that lark. They now keep a supply of farthings, the price of pins having gone up like the price of whiskey.

My own firm opinion is that women are proverbially lucky at racing. I have seen and heard of so many instances that I am forced to accept this idea. Of course the majority are born gamblers. I won't listen to any contradiction. Some of them would gamble

their last "bob," which accounts for the fact that in certain suburban neighbourhoods milkmen and greengrocers slyly take "slips" with horses' names written upon them when they call upon the lady of the house for orders.

There is probably no more harm in a woman having a bet or two than doing a theatre, or a dance-hall. I am old-fashioned in some things, but a twenty-three-year-old daughter generally puts the damper on me if I preach by butting in with the slang expression: "I should smile!"

What I should like to emphasise is that women back winners for the queerest reasons under the sun. On a race-course they will chance a couple of shillings on their fancy because they like the owner's colours, or, perhaps, because the jockey—some little six-stone chap—looks a "perfect duck." If they heard him saying "sweet nothings" to his mount as it rears on the way to the post they might change their bright opinion of his virtues.

The luckiest woman I ever knew on the Turf backed Captain Cuttle to win a lot of money in the Derby because, as she told me, the name reminded her of her favourite character in fiction. It was no earthly use me assuring her that Cutcliffe-Hyne's dare-devil of a skipper was called Kettle, and not Cuttle. She would not have it. Now, if I had made that silly error, and planked my little bit on the colt instead of paying what was overdue to the income-tax collector, I am sure that Tamar or Craigangower would have "pipped" Steve's mount on the post.

Another woman of my acquaintance backed Christmas Daisy in the Cambridgeshire because somebody told her that the horse had won the race twice in succession six years before. She was, of course, mixing up the "Daisy" with Hackler's Pride. Evidently what she had actually been told was that the stable had previously twice won the race.

Some lady owners bet to an alarming extent. I saw

one put £600 on a horse in the Cambridgeshire, while one of the biggest firms of commission agents in the country has a lady client who will ring them a few minutes before the "off" and ask them to take a £1000 wager on a horse she fancies.

CHAPTER XVIII

SMALL TRAINERS AND THEIR DIFFICULTIES

ONE day I amused myself by looking through an alphabetical list of trainers who hold licences from the National Hunt Committee, and I must confess there were several whom I had never heard of, let alone met in the course of my wanderings round the jumping tracks. I suppose most of them manage to make a living, but it puzzles me how they do it, for it is only once in a blue moon that they have the luck to saddle a winner.

They cannot afford to employ the crack riders, so generally put up a lad attached to the stable and, as it takes much practice in public to become a proficient horseman, the novice is well up against it when competing with the Hardys, the Specks and the Stotts.

To obtain a National Hunt licence a trainer must have three horses under his charge. Several capable trainers of my acquaintance cannot get this permit because they lack the necessary patronage. I know one trainer who owns three or four horses, but has no patronage. To all intents and purposes they are animals "put out to grass." He "does" them all himself, schools them occasionally over a fence or hurdle, but he cannot see his way to seriously train them at the moment, the reason being that he lacks the capital to enter them for races and pay the cost of their transport to the meetings. Also he lacks stable help, having one lad about the place to do odd jobs when there are any odd jobs to be done. Of course I know what will eventually happen; he will have to sell one or two of the horses providing he can find a

buyer, and somebody else will reap the benefit of his work.

One good friend of mine, who has trained a large number of winners, offered me a half-share in a horse for a mere song. I felt pretty sure that the horse would win a race or two, probably only "sellers," but it's all grist that comes to the mill. I had to refuse. It's no use being a "half-horse" man to-day. You can either afford to race, or you cannot afford to race.

The probability was that had I taken the half-share we should lose the horse at auction in the event of its winning, because it would not pay to buy it in. Then my trainer friend would have needed to acquire another horse in order to keep up his establishment.

As soon as jumping starts in real earnest all the small trainers are on the *qui vive* to get "busy." At the best they can only hope to pick up the crumbs, as it were, for the bigger stables are also out to make things pay. From them the very small trainer gets no mercy. He may think he has a good thing and it would be a good thing if Mr. Cleversticks had not sent a better class horse to pick up a £70 stake. Is it surprising that the small trainer at times gets disgusted with his lot in life?

Some of my racing friends, who could do small trainers a bit of good if they only went out of their way to help them, may laugh at my efforts to bang the drum in favour of the men who have three or four horses, and unless the fairy godmother comes to their door are not likely to get hold of any more, but that does not worry me.

It does not tickle my vanity to be seen talking to Lord Nosewho, or Capt. the Hon. D'Arcy Sellicks-Sellicks, outside the weighing-room, I would just as soon be seen having a convivial glass of bitter with Tom Whatyermaycallim, who has a few old "skins" in his yard at Epsom. Maybe he has to patch one up in order to win a selling hurdle at Wye. The only proviso is that Tom Whatyermaycallim must be a good fellow.

Now, the majority of small trainers I know are good fellows. I have heard them called all sorts of thugs when they have won with a horse that has been down the course on previous occasions, but you can take it from me that all the Turf roguery is not hatched in the small trainers' coops. Seeing what they have to compete against, it surprises me to know how really honest they continue to be to their patrons.

Racing, as I have said, is a game of wits. The more I see of it the more I am convinced that you need eyes in the back of your cranium to come out on top. You have probably heard the story of the trainer who would not sleep in the same room with his wife for a week before he was expecting to bring off a big coup in case he talked in his sleep. He knew *she* talked! Well, a lot of trainers are like that—mostly big trainers.

I suppose at some time they have been "sold a pup." They may have told their jockey or their head lad more than they intended, and the secret has been broadcast to a select few, who passed it on, as racing folk do. That may be the reason why certain trainers I could name never employ a regular jockey, preferring to get crack riders down for their trials and take their pick of the jockeys who are not engaged a few hours before the time of the race.

The small trainer cannot indulge in this luxury, as the crack jockeys naturally expect more than the regulation fee in the event of success. As the small trainer does not bet in hundreds, and it is safe to assume in the majority of cases that his patrons are in the same boat, he must take the chance of putting up a "chalk" rider, and perchance have his horse indifferently ridden, or endeavour to persuade a crack horseman to help him out.

National Hunt jockeys do not reap such a harvest in the four months odd comprising the jumping season proper that they can ply their hire for "nowt." Many capable riders find it impossible to live on what they earn. They have just as heavy expenses to pay for travelling and hotels as the flat-race jockey who is

earning £10,000 a year. Of course that is not literally true, for expensive jockeys often have expensive tastes.

Still, it's only the difference between travelling first and third after all is said and done. One hotel is not very much dearer than another. It means an expenditure of from 30s. to £2 per day going the rounds of the meetings, and jumping jockeys often attend a meeting and fail to get a single mount.

What it costs the jockey it costs the small trainer. When he is away from home his family must live. If he is sending horses to courses a hundred miles away from his training establishment he has to find the wherewithal for two lodgings in the case of himself, and the additional expenses of his lads.

I know that some race-course executives allow generous rebates on transport costs of horses in order to obtain entries, but many small trainers cannot afford to incur any extra expense. In consequence they only enter at meetings within a reasonable distance from home.

Owners, especially men of wealth, are conservative in their choice of a trainer. The majority, I suppose, would like to have their horses trained at Newmarket. They all flock to what I may term the "star" trainers. Oh yes, there are "stars" in the training world just as there are "stars" on the stage and screen.

Many trainers, in my opinion, have too large strings under their charge. It is a sheer impossibility to give individual attention to every animal in the stable. I am not altogether sure that the trainers with the big strings are the cleverest. "Good horses make good trainers" is an expression that is often repeated. But they don't always.

If I liked to be personal I could name one or two trainers who, in my own opinion, are bad trainers. In being personal I should be libellous as well, for I could not prove my assertion in a court of law that they have "murdered" horses by wrong methods of training.

There is no ruling at present as to how many horses

a trainer shall keep in his yard. It might be a good idea if the Jockey Club and the National Hunt Committee struck some sort of an average and made a limit above which a trainer could not go. I am not out to kill enterprise, but it would certainly solve many of the difficulties of the small trainer.

At the opening of the flat racing season, several trainers had between forty and fifty horses under their charge, at least two had nearer eighty. I don't say that some trainers are not capable of managing seventy or eighty horses. The trainers who are fortunate to have such numbers might conceivably do full justice to one hundred, but they are exceptions. It is only when I hear of clever men with horses touting to obtain one foot on the ladder of life that I feel sorry that things should be so terribly unequal.

I admire an owner who places his horses with different trainers. It may lead to a mess up at times, but it gives a chance to the smaller men. That from the owner's point of view it adds to the cost I am ready to admit ; but, as I said before, you can either afford to race or you can't.

People who cannot afford to race are not wanted on the Turf as owners. It can only mean that to make the game pay they will need to habitually cheat.

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CHAPTER XIX

FAMOUS JOCKEYS I HAVE KNOWN—MAHER, "STEVE," SLOAN AND
RICHARDS—THEIR METHODS OF RIDING COMPARED

DOUBTLESS the finer art of jockeyship is of very ancient origin ; at all events it will save me a great deal of needless research if I take it as so. I have seen most of the crack horsemen of the past thirty years. I have known some of them fairly intimately. Somewhere among my belongings I have a watch-chain made from hairs drawn from the tail of the Derby winner Melton. It was given to my father by the late Fred Archer. I have never worn it, and never shall. It would take me many an hour's search to find it.

Archer, I suppose, was a wonderful jockey, but apart from the fact that I am charitably disposed, I should never think of comparing him to "Danny" Maher, or to Gordon Richards or Steve Donoghue, for you cannot compare riders of different generations.

Most people who only know Steve from what they read about him in the newspapers may be inclined to place a halo round the little man's head, but Steve is just a human, unsophisticated individual. He would not know how to put on side if you offered him all the money in the Bank of England.

You don't have to get to the bottom of his nature to find that he is a great little gentleman, brimming over with good will, and kindness to all with whom he comes in contact. I have played cricket with him so I know.

Placing folk on pedestals is a silly business. It is

easy to excuse the schoolboy who regards Don Bradman as a hero, and worships at his shrine. In a way, Bradman is a hero, but, like other heroes, when you know him he is just an ordinary sort of chap, "even as you and I." Unfortunately, I haven't the pleasure of knowing him, except from a seat in the cricket pavilion. But I know Steve, and I knew Danny Maher, Frank Wootton, Tom Loates, Tod Sloan, the late Fred Rickaby, the Reiffs, and Jack Watts. It would be doing an injustice to Steve to say that at his zenith he was not as good as any of those fine horsemen.

What I like about Steve is that he is so very human. He takes the rough jolts of fortune without a murmur, and is always one of the first to congratulate a successful rival. When he notches a "duck" at cricket he doesn't say that he was unlucky. If he gets beat a short head he never blames his mount. He can still ride the heads off many of his rivals, and I am downright pleased he can, for Steve has been a public idol for many years.

Bobby Jones and "Sheff" Wragg are two other little gentlemen among the jockeys I know. I could talk to Carslake for hours, and without meaning to be discriminating you can get more sound logic on life from Tommy Weston and Fred Herbert than you'd obtain from many a politician in a month of Sundays. As for Gordon Richards and Johnnie Dines, well, you want to know them to appreciate their excellent qualities and their humorous outlook on men and things.

A lengthy experience of the world and a cheerful outlook on life are valuable assets. I have often thanked my lucky stars that I possess a sense of humour. It has made me laugh when I ought to have been sad. I think Steve is rather of that calibre, for nothing seems to worry him. If he laughed at a funeral I should never accuse him of irreverence. It would be just that something, some little passing theme, a thought, had tickled his fancy, causing him to forget the solemn moment.

Some years ago I took that great American statesman, William Jennings Bryan, better known as the "silver-tongued orator," to the House of Commons to hear an important debate. I found him just an ordinary man. We talked of many things, including jockeys and the difference between the Yankee style of riding and the English. One night at the Saracen's Head at Hanley I held the script of the first act of *Cæsar Borgia* while H. B. Irving went through his part with me to see if he was word perfect. "H. B." was just an ordinary man.

I was in the company of Lord Birkenhead at Southampton when he made one of the best fighting election speeches I have ever listened to. The next day I hurried to Newmarket to see Twelve Pointer win the Cambridgeshire. And on the way I thought: "Yes, Lord Birkenhead is just an ordinary man."

And it is so. You have to know people to get what we racing folk term the "real strength." Probably if you knew Steve you would be horribly disillusioned. I am sure you would say:

"I did not think he was quite like that."

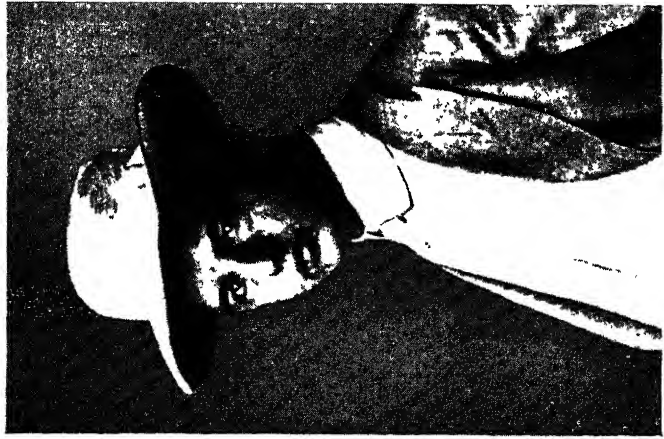
But what a good thing it is that he is "like that." You can take it from me that Steve is popular because he isn't an autocrat. Autocrats may attain respect, but they are seldom of the people.

Extraordinary physical strength for his stature, a nerve of iron, delicate hands, plus an uncanny judgment in a close finish, were some of the distinguishing qualities of the late Danny Maher. Yet in several years' rivalry I cannot say that he proved himself a greater jockey than Frank Wootton, who was born a horseman. Maher, in my opinion, was one of the best jockeys I ever saw. Mornington Cannon was a very fine rider, who also possessed such delicate touch that no two-year-old feared him, or failed to act to his orders. The only horse he could not manage was *Diamond Jubilee*, but Cannon, realising that the subsequent Triple Crown hero seemed to dislike him, asked to be relieved from riding the horse again.

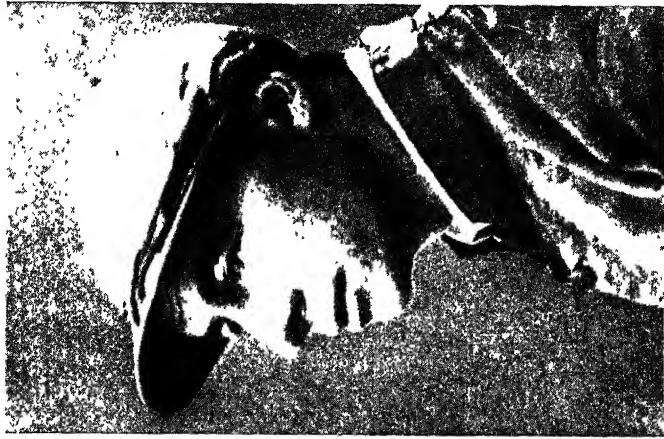


Photograph [Frank Griggs, Newmarket]

"DANNY" MAHER



JOHN REIFF



Photograph [Frank Griggs, Newmarket]

OTTO MADDEN

George Barrett, Tommy Loates, Jack Watts, Fred Webb, Allsopp and Bradford, were all excellent riders. Otto Madden, Fred Rickaby, Billy Higgs, "Skeets" Martin, the Reiffs, Willie Lane, Barrington Lynham, Herbert Jones, Bert Randall, George Stern, Charlie Wood, Tom Cannon and Fred Barrett could not be left out of any list of "cracks," and, to save any controversy, there are many names contemporary with these riders I have not mentioned.

Tom Cannon was, perhaps, the most graceful jockey of all times. He had a wonderful seat, as they say. Maher was a graceful rider; Joe Childs, as a stylist, cannot be beaten to-day. He is part and parcel of his mount. When Childs is up it is a case of man and horse acting in unison.

Everyone who had the great good fortune to see Joe win the Newbury Cup on *Limelight*, and a race at Ascot on the same horse, knows that I am not flattering him one iota. He could not ride a poor race if he tried, and that is saying something. When I saw him win his first big handicap at Ascot many years ago he could go to scale at a few pounds over 6 stone.

Harry Wragg excelled himself the day he won the Derby on *Blenheim*. He showed us that the Derby could be won by waiting. Hitherto Steve Donoghue had set the fashion of making it a "pillar to post" affair. And I think so much of Steve's riding ability that I should not care to insinuate that the method he invariably adopts at Epsom is wrong. Different styles again, you see.

Every old-timer you meet says there has never been a rider of the calibre of Fred Archer. I never saw Fred Archer, but my father was a great friend of this noted jockey, and I believe he rated the rider of *Ormonde* so highly because of his astounding daring, his intuitive knowledge of pace, and the fact that he seldom rode two horses similarly, since he knew that no two were alike. For all his praise of Archer, however, my father always said that at the finish of a race

George Fordham was Archer's master, and this judgment was borne out by the famous jockey and one time starter Harry Custance, who gave the palm to Fordham because the horses he rode always finished straight, and seldom changed their legs, while Archer's mounts often did the reverse, as he finished with a loose rein.

In other words one jockey (Fordham) sat back in the saddle and drove his horse from him, never having loosed his head and the other (Archer), riding long, invariably got up the horse's neck.

One of the "gossip" writers has suggested that Gordon Richards is better advertised than anybody. I can't have that; there's "Greta" and "Tallulah" to say nothing of "Amy" of flying fame. I know that Richards is in the public eye because he has beaten Fred Archer's record of winning points in a season, but he never sought all this notoriety.

Amongst the jockeys, Richards is as reserved as any I have met in a long day's march. He hates publicity of any kind, and would run away and hide if he thought that any bouquets were going to be showered upon him. I remember the day he rode his first winner. He did not think he had done anything clever. He was not a bit elated, or if he was he did not show it outwardly. For you see, when Gordon decided that he was going to be a jockey he determined that he would ride winners.

If he had not been level-headed he would have been spoilt in his second season on the Turf. But he kept out of the way of those ill-advised people who endeavour to make princes out of commoners. He had no desire to "see life," to "hit up the high spots," preferring rather to get away from the race-course, hide himself in a first-class carriage, and enjoy the jokes in popular periodicals.

I saw him one day returning from a northern meeting tucked in a railway carriage corner with an apple and a paper. Somebody asked me whom the "little fellow" was. I replied, "That's Richards the jockey." All

I got was a scornful look. "Quite sure it ain't the Prince of Wales?"

Of course it is a very good thing for racing that Richards and a few of his fellow-riders I could name are like this. Jockeys who have made a name are beset with every conceivable temptation. If they were not strong-willed they would very soon find themselves up the wrong turning. Flattery is a subtle thing. It gets hold of you like the tentacles of an octopus, and unless you are proof against it you soon find yourself ordering a larger size in hats. Few people I have met in my time have the power to resist it, and when I run across someone who can show an iron front, I want to hand them over the whole baker's shop.

Amongst the racing fraternity to-day are jockeys who once had the ball at their feet. Now they are knocking about race-courses, mixing with all the undesirables and picking up a scanty existence by devious means. I am not going to mention any names, because it is not necessary, but you can take it from me that if they had the chance to start all over again, most of them would follow in the footsteps of Gordon Richards and "keep themselves to themselves."

In many instances they were led away by their so-called friends, and when the inevitable crash came those who had lauded them up to the skies, feasted them and made little tin gods of them, left their unfortunate victims in the lurch.

Tod Sloan might have been riding for ten years after his licence was refused by the Jockey Club had he been proof against temptation. The little Yankee horseman was one of the finest jockeys of his time, but he could not say "No" to a flatterer. He thought that everybody he met was a "good fellow." He paid dearly for his stupidity, and when I met him in Paris some years after, all he could say was :

"You can kick me for being a 'mutt.'"

Poor old Tod! He was humbled into the dust by the plaudits of female admirers and people who ought to have known better, but to Tod they did not accord

half the "bunk" they keep on handing out to Gordon.

I can see Tod now, strutting around like a peacock. You had merely to tell him what a good fellow he was, and he'd say :

"Have five dollars, have a cigar, have anything you darn well like, bo."

He seemed to effervesce over praise ; it got him "on the raw."

Now, Gordon is not doing very much more than Tod did in the late 'nineties, for the little American jockey pulverised his fellow "Knights of the Pigskin" just as the elder Richards does to-day. Professional backers made fortunes out of Tod Sloan's winning rides. Some of them won so much from the ring that when they began to lose they stole away as the Arabs in the night—without paying their just dues.

Gordon Richards' legion of followers are also making money, not so fast, perhaps, as folk did over Tod, for Gordon has many more mounts in the course of his six days' work. They only used to put Tod up on the real "gingers." Gordon does not mind riding any horse if he has promised the owner he will take the mount.

If Tod Sloan had been as strong-minded as Gordon he'd have retired with more money than he knew what to do with. But he lived in great style. Expensive tastes were his undoing. To eke out the thousands of pounds he earned by presents and riding fees he started to bet, putting vast sums on horses he rode himself. In a way it was all above board ; he did not pull horses in order that another horse he had backed should be permitted to win. Rather he preferred to "punt" on his own mounts.

I was always sorry for Tod Sloan ; it was not his fault, but his weakness. Half the things he was accused of doing he never did. It is the way of life and imagination. Be given the credit of being "a bit of a lad," and somebody will revel in pitching a yarn about you for their own personal edification.

Retainers paid to leading riders are as large as the salaries of Cabinet Ministers. Presents and supplementary fees can earn a good jockey a big amount yearly. Some brilliant riders I could name, apart from Tod Sloan, chucked all this away because they could not "carry corn."

The life of our jockeys to-day is very different from what it was. In education, manners, dress and general deportment they are as unlike some of the old-time men as chalk is to cheese. No longer do jockeys trudge to a distant meeting or travel third-class on the railway. They have their cars, they charter an aeroplane when necessary, and spend well money that is well earned.

Some of them make a muck of things. Yet, taken all round, it is not often that we hear of a scandal associated with their names. A lot of this talk about jockeys betting is the idle talk of the race-course hanger-on. A very strict hand is kept by the Jockey Club, and long may this body enjoy despotic authority over all persons licensed in racing. No jockey will be tolerated if his conduct is not commendable. Once he comes under the ban of the Jockey Club his number is up.

A jockey cannot own horses or train horses if he is a professional rider. Personally, I would sooner have some jockeys owning horses than some bookmakers, but when there is a clashing of interests, as there must necessarily be in such cases, it is undesirable. Jockeys at one time were permitted to bet, not openly, but the powers that were winked the other eye when they heard about it. They only warned the parties concerned when they found that things were getting a bit too sultry. This, however, was years and years ago.

Most of the big Turf scandals can be attributed to professional backers rather than bookmakers and jockeys. Due to their iniquities were the much-talked about jockey's "rings." They tempted jockeys to evade the rules as to gambling.

I don't hesitate to say that any professional backer

or bookmaker who gives a jockey money in order to secure his desired end has a most demoralising influence on all riders. Such people ought to be "warned off" for life. I suppose certain operators still deem it worth while to pay for "information." I hear such stories from time to time, and of course the difficulty of the Jockey Club in dealing with specific cases of bribery is the reluctance of those behind the scenes to make formal complaint. Hearsay is one thing, direct evidence quite another.

Occasionally something happens in racing that requires an explanation. Certain professional backers could doubtless provide all the explanation necessary. "What's So-and-So backing?" is often a more sure guide to an animal's chance than anything revealed by the book of form.

But to return to the more pleasant subject of Gordon Richards. Why is it that he wins so many races? It isn't because he is always able to pick his mounts. Certainly he gets a number of mounts on fancied horses, but there are times when his rides start at long prices. It is also very obvious that many of his successes would not be achieved on the same horses by other jockeys.

Gordon's main objective, when he goes to the post, is to jump his mount smartly away. He recognises that a quick start is half the battle. He never gets it into his head that the rails position is the best berth. He has an uncanny way of picking up a horse that has become unbalanced, and steadying it for a stride or two. Watching him closely, I have always thought that he wins the majority of his races through being in front at the distance.

In a close race the challenger should have an advantage over the challenged, for he knows exactly what he has to do, while the other fellow, left guessing, needs to strain to hold the early advantage. Gordon seldom puts himself in this position. If he's in front at the distance, nine times out of ten he's home, and dry.

I don't blame backers for following him blindly.

Form and weight is a secondary consideration when Richards is up. It used to be "Come on, Steve!" Now it's "Come on, Gordon!" Win the Derby? Of course he will; you couldn't stop him. If not this year, next, or the year after.

CHAPTER XX

JOCKEYSHIP AND HORSEMANSHIP—STABLE LADS WHO NEVER GET A CHANCE TO SHINE—SOME NOTED AMATEUR RIDERS

THERE is a vast distinction between jockeyship and horsemanship, though the terms may sound synonymous. I've known jockeys whose actual knowledge of the physiology of the horse practically amounted to nil. They could stick in the saddle as if they were glued to it, and some of them had their full measure of success ; but when it came to analysing an animal's temperament, constitution, properties and eccentricities, they must have regarded it as a waste of time.

The jockey who thinks that the beginning and end of his job is getting his mount smartly away from the barrier and endeavouring to keep in front until the post is passed will not go far up the ladder of fame. Sooner or later he will find himself riding an animal that wants a lot of understanding. Then the band *will* play.

Most trainers are the best judges of how a horse should be ridden, for they make a study of the animals under their charge. When they know their jockey they don't go out of their way to tie him down with instructions, for after all is said and done, the man a-top should be able to call the tune. In the course of a race things don't always go in the way that might be expected. Something happens in running to knock the stuffing out of the best laid plans. That is the time when the rider has to use his "nut."

The jockey who won't carry out instructions is no use to a trainer. Blatant disobedience to orders, of

course, meets with a quick reprisal. The jockey does not ride again for that particular stable, but there are jockeys riding to-day who think they know more than their masters. They don't wilfully go contrary to orders, but on their return to scale they are always prone to offer a ready excuse for not doing something they ought to have done.

I repeat it is an old racing saying that "horses are not machines." It covers a multitude of shins. The trouble with some jockeys is that they think they are. You cannot tickle up a horse in the way that you can the carburetter of a speedway rider's motor-cycle, for the average horse won't have it. And from my small knowledge of speedway riders the majority of them know all about the mechanism of their "bikes" before they take their first ride on a track. That is why I say that all jockeys should know and study the A.B.C. of temperament in horses.

Some of the lads who "do" the horses know more about their temperaments than the jockeys who actually ride in the race. The reason is that they are out at exercise on the home gallops seven days a week, and are often put up in trials.

The majority of these lads never get a chance to ride in public. Sometimes—very occasionally—it so happens that the regular stable jockey cannot get on with a horse. The lad who "does" him might then be given a trial.

When a stable lad is offered a chance I am always pleased to see him make good, for I know what it means to his future. He may get this one ride in public, and everything depends on it. The next ride comes—goodness only knows when.

You have to live with horses to study them and understand their funny little ways. No two horses are of similar disposition, as the lads who groom them will tell you. The average free-lance jockey, flitting about from stable to stable, getting mounts here, there and any old where, never does really get to know a horse, but he won't tell you so. Some jockeys think they can

know a horse in ten minutes. Some can, but they are the born horsemen—the fellows with horse-sense.

Now, most stable lads are possessed of horse-sense. They get it knocked into them—sometimes by the animals under their charge. I don't know whether you have ever been kicked or savaged by a horse. I have. I have experienced both these pleasant sensations!

Some years ago I felt the force of Sir Visto's hoof when visiting The Durdans stud farm, and it was a good job for me that I was a bit too near to him. Instinctively I got in a bit closer instead of backing away. Sir Visto was a spiteful horse in his later days. During the war, too, I was kicked on the head by a Spanish mule, I didn't know much about anything for the next six hours.

Stable boys until they get used to horses have a rough time, what with being kicked and trodden upon in the course of their duties. The average old race-horse is fairly docile, but skittish two-year-olds will play rare larks at times. Occasionally we read reports of stable boys being thrown off horses and seriously injured, but they get many a buffeting that nobody outside the establishment ever hears about. They have to take the rough with the smooth.

All race-course executives ought to be compelled to include at least one apprentices' race in the programme at every meeting. It is only right to give budding jockeys a chance to prove their worth. There are many lads in every stable, especially the big stables, who, for all the opportunities they will ever get of following in the footsteps of Gordon Richards and the other shining lights of his profession, might just as well be apprenticed to a cheese-monger.

They enter a stable at the age of fourteen for a certain term of years, and at thirteen if the parents can get the sanction of the education authorities. At the end of their period of apprenticeship they become stable lads, with their regulation two horses to "do."

Owners want their horses ridden to the best advantage. Fully fledged riders are therefore given the preference over stable boys unless the weight necessitates a light lad being put up. I am sure that the only way to help the ambitious apprentice is for the powers that be to provide the means of bringing him to the fore by doubling the number of races at present open to these "5 lb. lads."

Events confined to apprentices are few and far between. They are not popular with race-goers, and I am sure that the average trainer does not care for them, either. Owners are loth to patronise apprentice plates, which means that the horses that run for them are mostly third-raters.

Race-goers, of course, view the matter through their pockets. They dislike risking their money when tyro jockeys are a-top. Whenever an event for apprentices is about to be decided you hear backers asking each other :

"Can the lad on So-and-So ride?"

Certain trainers of my acquaintance do not mind putting one of their boys up in this type of race, but they jib when it comes to asking them to compete against skilled jockeys. I have been told by trainers that apprentices' events serve no useful purpose, but with that I cannot agree. Why they fall flat is because there are not enough of them in the course of a racing season.

It is a knowledge of race-riding gained in these minor affairs that teaches a lad the art of jockeyship. I agree that if a promising lad is never going to get a chance outside riding against jockeys no more skilled than himself he will not do much good, but it would be no use teaching a child how to spell until he has memorised his A.B.C.

The trouble with the average apprentice, of course, is that he gets too heavy, but I have heard of many small boys in racing stables who will not weigh more than 8 st. until they reach the age of manhood. From fifteen to seventeen seems to be what I may term the critical

age of an apprentice's life. If he does not "get going" by then, he is not likely to after.

It may seem strange, but practically all the best jockeys have come from a few stables. A lad has practically no opportunity in a small stable; hence parents when they are thinking of signing their sons' indentures, invariably place them under the charge of a well-known trainer with a lot of horses.

From what trainers have told me, jockeys are born, not made. I think this is literally true, but a fair rider can be taught to be a better rider, and a good rider can be developed into a crack rider, always so long as his master will take sufficient interest in his future.

The trouble is that few trainers have the time, or, perhaps, the inclination to persevere with the raw material. Some trainers leave the actual control of their staff to the head lad. If the head lad happens to be of the sergeant-major type it is understandable that few lads do get the opportunity for which they crave.

I am not going to name the trainers who specialise in turning out jockeys, but there are not many of them. I know two or three small trainers who have persevered with lads whose ability has not been worth the time and trouble expended on them.

Because a boy has the good luck to ride a few winners it does not mean that he must become a skilled horseman. Some boys get quite a lot of mounts in public, but I must say that they would not ride for me were I an owner. I don't think they will ever make jockeys.

On the contrary, I could name several promising apprentices who have dropped out. The reason they dropped out was because they were not given a chance after they lost the 5 lb. allowance. This is entirely the fault of their masters, and the attitude adopted by certain owners, who can see no farther than their nose when it comes to a question of L.S.D.

It has long been my contention that while we see some marvellous feats of jockeyship on the part of those riders who confine their attentions to steeple-

chasing and hurdling, the judgment displayed at other times by experienced riders is appalling. It makes me go all colours of the rainbow when I see a jockey flog a beaten horse into a fence instead of pulling him out of the race. I regret to say that I have witnessed such a performance on many occasions. I have even seen the beaten horse fall for about the third or fourth time, and if he hasn't broken his neck he has been seriously injured.

A few years ago, in the Grand National, a jockey I could name (he is now riding at the top of his form), persisted in going after the field when his mount had fallen at the second or third fence from the start. By the time he got going the rest of the runners and riders were sailing merrily along four or five fences ahead.

Coming back to town after the race, I happened to meet the jockey on the train. In fact, we dined together. I asked him why, after taking two purlers, he thought his mount was still in the race. To my amazement he replied :

" When I heard the crowd shouting I had to catch the horse and go on, but the first fall had knocked all the stuffing out of him."

Nice for the horse, eh ? The poor beast was pumped out, but still tried to do his best. At the back of my mind I have an idea that my jockey acquaintance thought he was doing a plucky thing in remounting three times. One of the papers described his efforts the next day as a " game exhibition of horsemanship." I should have described it as an awful exhibition of crass stupidity. However, he doesn't do it now.

Anybody who has ridden over obstacles knows that when a horse falls at a jump he is far more likely to suffer the main injury than his rider, who can probably roll clear of the trouble or take a " circus tumble."

I should like to see a stipendiary steward stationed down the course at all jumping meetings. His duty would be to see that jockeys were not cruel to their mounts, and he would report all delinquents for summary treatment.

As I have indicated in another chapter some horses like jumping fences. You can see the zest they put into their efforts, but it is the excitement of the chase that carries them on. To say that every animal takes to the business as a duck takes to water is stretching the long bow. A lot of horses loathe hurdling or steeplechasing. Stand at a fence and watch the nervous manner in which they take off. No amount of schooling will entirely remove the fear that they may fall.

When a horse falls at a certain fence in the course of a race he is liable to fall at the same obstacle again. Probably at the very same place where he took off in his previous effort.

This is where the art of horsemanship comes in. The clever rider, the man who uses his "nut," will see that his mount does not take the jump at the same spot. He will probably tuck him in behind another horse so that his vision of the fatal fence is obscured, then, when he rises automatically at the command of his rider, he is up and over before he realises what has happened.

Not only is steeplechasing a hard game, but steeplechase jockeys are a rough and ready lot. Theirs is a strenuous life. There is very little consideration shown to the nervous horse by other riders. They are all out to win, and at fence or hurdle it is "give and take." Hard riders to hounds are often brutal to their mounts without meaning to be. What they lack is consideration. It is the same with jockeys.

I hate to see a horse come back terribly distressed after a gruelling race over jumps, but I am sorry to say that I often do. Another nasty sight is to see a panic-stricken animal, who has fallen heavily, careering up and down the course in a mad endeavour to find his way back to his stable.

On more than one occasion delay has occurred in shooting horses who have fallen and broken a fetlock or leg. A veterinary surgeon is in attendance at every race-course, and there is no excuse whatever for him

being somewhere else when his services are urgently required.

In most cases it is a matter of minutes for the vet. to examine a horse and say whether he is fatally injured. It is a matter of seconds to shoot him with the humane cattle killer. I shot dozens of horses in France during the war and saw hundreds shot who could have been cured of their ills. That is why I am sympathetic, and apt to let myself go when incidents I regard as sheer brutality come before my notice.

Many of the old school of amateur jockeys were equally at home over a country or on the flat. E. P. Wilson, the Beasleys, the Hon. G. Lambton (he was then "Mr. George"), Captain "Roddy" Owen, C. J. Cuninghame, Captain Smith, J. Maunsell Richardson, Arthur Coventry, and, later on, H. M. Ripley, J. J. Ferguson, A. Gordon, H. Sidney, "Atty" Persse, Ivor and Jack Anthony, Peter Roberts, Harry Brown and Percy Whitaker.

E. P. Wilson was a great rider over jumps. One of his feats was to win the National Hunt Steeplechase four years in succession, once at Birmingham, once at Derby, once at Melton and once at Leicester. The race was then a "movable feast." For some years now it has been decided at Cheltenham.

It was one of the years when the race was decided at Sandown Park that Mr. Lambton won on a horse called Glen Thorpe. He and many of the other gentlemen riders used to do their "schools" at the late Arthur Yates' place, Bishop's Sutton, and from what I have heard tell, as they say, "them was the days."

I saw "Atty" Persse win the National Hunt 'chase on Marpessa, at Warwick, in 1902, and I also saw Ivor Anthony win it on Timothy Titus at Cheltenham two years later. They thought "Timothy" would win the Grand National, but he failed because he was of the hunter type, lacking speed.

Harry Ussher, now training in Ireland (he had Kilcash Hill and, some years ago, Ballyboggan), was a

fine rider in his day, so were D. Thirlwell and H. M. Ripley. My ideal amateur jockey over jumps was the late Captain Bennett, who won the Grand National on Sergeant Murphy. I remember seeing him win a hurdle race at Windsor when the odds against his getting up on the post could not have been named. He also won the National Hunt Steeplechase on Bugler.

The late Aubrey Hastings rode on the flat, but he excelled over a stiffish country. His greatest win was on the one-eyed Ascetic's Silver in the "National" of 1906.

Talking about gentlemen jockeys, I was recently asked if I regarded the present amateurs as being equal to those of the past. I think so. Of course, there were more amateur riders before the war, and in the so-called good old days of the 'eighties and early 'nineties than there are to-day. Men with sporting inclinations had more time on their hands and more money to burn.

Undoubtedly the best amateur jockey I ever saw on the flat was the present Sir G. Thursby, who used to ride as Mr. George Thursby when his father, the late Sir John Thursby, had a large stable of horses. On two occasions Sir George finished second in the Derby—on John o' Gaunt in 1904 and on Picton in 1906. Popular sporting novelists have a partiality for making their hero ride the winner of the Derby, but amateurs don't ride in the Epsom classic these days—few of them could ever hope to do the weight.

Sir George Thursby rode several stirring finishes against the late "Danny" Maher, and he wasn't always beaten. He rode against the professionals at level weights, which shows what a jockey he must have been. Harry Randall also rode as an amateur, and he was quite an excellent exponent of the art. Afterwards he turned professional. And please don't mix him up with the famous music-hall comedian of that name!

The later Alec Cottrill was as good a jockey as any professional. He was able to ride at a handy weight,

but he mostly confined himself to "bumper" events at Lewes, Salisbury and other venues which still cater for the gentleman "jock."

In the old days amateurs frequently took on the "pros" on the flat, and they were a hard school of riders. In the saddle, day after day, riding schooling gallops and taking part in trials. Some of them used to boast that they sat up half the night playing cards, dancing, and generally enjoying themselves to the full, but they'd be out on the trial ground soon after 6 a.m. Jockeys to-day don't sit up half the night ; they could not keep fit if they did.

CHAPTER XXI

ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF RACE-TRACKS

FOR many reasons I have been against the centralisation of racing, but I think that it will have to come. The Lincoln autumn fixture has been abandoned for several seasons, and the additional attraction of the Tote is not sufficient to bring people to the course. Even local support is nothing like it has been in former years, and, from what I have heard, I doubt whether the second meeting on the Carholme will be repeated.

It is a great pity, but these are the days when it is folly to "flog" anything for which there is no public demand. Race-goers will not attend Lincoln to witness poor sport. The place is too far away from the big centres, and I am afraid that all the improvements in the world will not induce patronage. This meeting and one or two others have been on the wane for many years.

As regards Lincoln I am not surprised. The bleak Carholme in November is a wash-out. It would be a wash-out in March, but for the attraction of the Lincolnshire Handicap. This race, in a way, is a unique event, coming as it does with the opening of a new season on the flat. The Lincolnshire gets far more publicity than it deserves, for it seldom attracts horses in the top class among handicappers.

As a rule, the winner descends to selling plates before many months, and the average horse that runs on the Carholme is not of much account. The one-time popular Brocklesby Stakes is but a shadow of its former self. The value of the stake has dropped, and

under the present conditions we should never see a two-year-old again competing of the calibre of The Bard. The Batthyany Plate has also gone by the board. Races of a similar character are now a daily feature of the smaller meetings. As a sprint the "Batthyany" is a mere nothing.

To draw a marked comparison one has only to instance Liverpool. The four days' fixture is always a great success, despite shortage of money, caused by the state of trade in this country. Lincoln and Liverpool are chalk and cheese. And they come in the same week.

It would be far better to have six days' racing at Liverpool and cut out the Carholme fixture altogether. Not that I am an advocate of any fixture lasting more than four days.

I have always said that if a race-course could be laid down in Hyde Park, and it was managed on up-to-date lines, not only Londoners would flock to it, but people from places within a radius of a hundred miles. Racing in big centres is always an attraction. At places inaccessible it will never catch on. People would not go if they were taken there free, gratis and for nothing.

Chepstow, in my opinion, will never be a successful undertaking. The new course at Taunton can only attract the locals. It was thought that the Bournemouth fixture would catch on, and when those concerned in the venture put up the argument that thousands of people holiday-making or living in the adjacent counties in the West would go to the meeting, it seemed on the face of it that they were putting up a pretty sound case. If they had obtained a flat-racing licence for Bournemouth the meeting would not have flourished.

Blackpool some years ago was a white elephant, but I doubt whether sport under Jockey Club rules would have resulted in the Blackpool venture being alive to-day. Yarmouth and Brighton pay largely because of the holiday element.

Racing must be in the immediate vicinity of big industrial centres. With the example of Liverpool, Newcastle, Doncaster, Manchester and York, I think this is a foregone conclusion. I should like to see all fixtures on these tracks four-day gatherings.

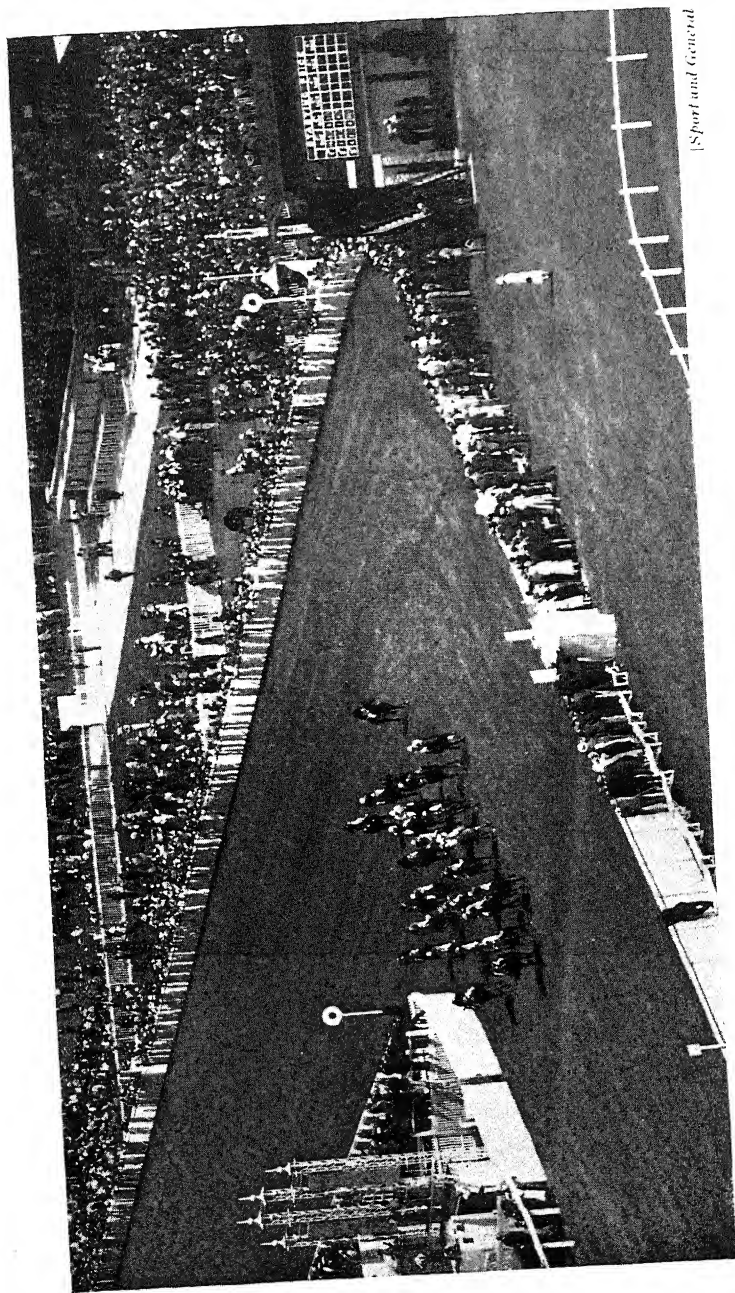
At Birmingham, I think if the programmes were overhauled and some valuable handicaps included in the card—say, two every season—we should see this fixture in the course of time on a par with Manchester and Liverpool. If there were a flat-racing course at Cardiff I can see no reason why the fixture should not pay. Unfortunately, there is not. Cardiff is no more difficult to get to than Manchester, and it is the most important town in South Wales.

Of the courses near London I should pick Sandown, Kempton, Newbury, Hurst and Epsom for my four days' fixtures. I don't include Ascot, for this fixture obtains its patronage entirely on prestige. It is a society function. I am not sure that a second meeting at Ascot would be a success. At any rate, it might damage the June gathering.

In order to popularise what I may term the big race-courses, it would be necessary to curtail the smaller ones. There are several fixtures in the Calendar which could well be dispensed with. Really, I don't think they would be missed.

There is no need for me to mention the courses I should close up or amalgamate with other tracks. Those who go racing regularly already know, and those who do not will probably disagree with my views. What I am thinking is that it would be good for the sport to concentrate on the race-courses that do attract both the "regular" and the casual race-goer. And somehow or other I imagine this state of affairs will eventually come about, though it may not be in my time.

At Chester, which is a sporting and popular meeting, there isn't even a straight five furlongs, any more than there is at Alexandra Park. The Jockey Club laid down a rule for new courses requiring flat-race



[Sport and General

"GLORIOUS" GOODWOOD

Finish of the Stewards' Cup as seen from Trundle Hill: Pharaon wins.

Photograph]

licences that there must be a straight mile. Personally I cannot see the advantages of a straight mile. The ideal track in my opinion is a circular one, or an oval, with a circumference of not less than a mile and a half. It is very difficult to judge running as seen from the stands on a straight track. Gatwick has a straight mile and the Pressmen who are detailed to report running have a head-on view. With a big field coming towards you it is no easy matter to say what is "making it," unless something is bang in the van.

Try your own possibly 'prentice hand at reading a race over the Rowley Mile or a mile at Newbury with a field of twenty. You need amazingly good eyesight plus amazingly good glasses to accurately pick out the leaders. I maintain that if one man stationed down the course at the half distance at Newbury compared notes with another who was reading the race from the stand their details would differ considerably.

The sprint course at Sandown presents another difficult angle from the stands. In a close finish I have heard more diversity of opinion as to what had won than you would get when a bevy of women are trying on hats. Kempton Park and Manchester are other courses where the angles are deceptive in a close finish with one horse under the judge's box and another on the far rails. The animal nearest the eye always seems to have the advantage.

When the field for the Hunt Cup is charging up the course at Ascot, the jockeys' colours presenting a kaleidoscopic effect to the eye, it takes years of practice to accurately pick out the leaders even when there is only half a mile to go. I always keep my race-glasses glued on the horse's hooves. Then I am not always right.

From a spectacular point of view, it is races on round tracks that enable the novice to use his powers of observation. A broadside view is the thing. However, after all is said and done the weird variety of the race-tracks in this country helps to make the sport of racing so fascinating. No two courses are exactly alike in conformation.

Lingfield is sometimes compared to Epsom, possibly because the races over the looped courses are both run left-handed. There is some similarity between the two tracks, but the downhill finish at Epsom is far more pronounced than at Lingfield. The final half-mile or so at Ascot is all "on the collar," as they say. Chepstow's finish is uphill, and what a hill! You can only just see the jockeys' caps at one point. The finish at Brighton is uphill.

Then we get Windsor, with its "figure of eight" loop, Leicester with its undulating gallop to the post, and round the back stretch as well; Liverpool with its several sharp bends; Warwick with its nasty-looking turn into the straight, and Hamilton Park, somewhat like "Ally Pally." Horses have to be versatile to give their true running over many differing gallops.

I have always regarded the round track at Hurst Park as a fair test of merit. Races are generally run true on this course. Birmingham provides a fine galloping stretch, and the round course at Sandown cannot be faulted in races of 10 furlongs or over. Newcastle, Nottingham and Wolverhampton are courses where form works out fairly well. By this I mean that luck in running is minimised to a great extent.

Thirsk is a fine course, but its fellow neighbour, Ripon, does not make much appeal to me. From a racing point of view, I am not keen on Lewes, Derby, or Redcar, but I like Haydock Park, though I haven't been there for some time.

Purely from the spectators' view-point, racing at Newmarket can never attract. Too much of the running is out of sight. Why somebody with a powerful voice does not advocate the laying down of a round track at headquarters beats me. As race-goers pay to see sport I maintain that they ought to be able to witness every yard of the running.

Australian sportsmen who come over here laugh at our race-tracks. One and all say they are too funny for words. American tracks, though mostly dirt-

tracks, are constructed with a view to those who patronise them being able to see the show.

A friend of mine from "down under," paying his first visit to Epsom a few years ago, stood on one of the stand tiers and gazed towards Tattenham Corner in awe.

"Do you mean to tell me the horses gallop down that slope?" he exclaimed.

He never gave up talking about Epsom race-course for the rest of the day. I think he was too flabbergasted to have a bet.

Still, variety is charming, we have always been told. Racing in this country has never been a cut-and-dried sport. Half the charm would vanish if every track was built to schedule. Also the "horses for courses" theory would be completely washed out. That would not do at all. I am certain many system workers, who stand fast as the colours that were nailed to the mast in the good old days of Nelson, would kick up a rare shindy if they could not exploit their pet theories. Horses that win at Epsom and Brighton often don't win anywhere else.

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CHAPTER XXII

A COUP THAT MISSED FIRE—MORE ABOUT SMALL TRAINERS—SOME OF
THE MEN I KNOW

IT gives me great pleasure to see the small stables beat the big stables. The trainer with a few horses is always up against the workings of fate. I have mentioned that he cannot win many of the important prizes, because he hasn't the animals in his yard worthy of competing against the class they would necessarily be up against. Hence he is compelled to put on his thinking cap in an endeavour to place his charges to the best advantage.

It goes without saying that the small owner and the small trainer need to bet in order to make ends meet. Thus they often get the credit of playing funny games, but the average small stable does not play any funnier game than some of the big ones. Racing is a game of wits, and curiously the clever fraternity do not always get the cream of the settling.

Some may wonder how the small owner and trainer manage to make the sport pay. I could name a few who win about two or three races a season. Yet they go on year after year. If they did not see back their outlay with interest I am sure they could not carry on.

Before the war, three friends of mine with a "bank" of something under £500 all told, clubbed together, and bought a horse. They placed the animal—a mere plater, and very "mere" at that—with a trainer who had about three other horses in his yard.

What sum they paid for this "skin" I just forget, but it was well under £200. There had to be a limit, for the rest of the "bank" was put by for a couple of

plunges, the second one being reckoned on in case the first did not come off. By the way, I ought to mention that their plater had some pretty useful form, though he had not won a race. Actually he had been placed in two or three "sellers," and in fair class plating company.

A consultation between the joint owners and the trainer resulted in the animal being entered for half a dozen races, including a second-rate handicap. They did not run him in the first two "sellers," as they wanted to see what weight he would get in the handicap. Somewhat to their surprise the animal got about 7 lb. under what they expected.

All that now remained was to find out the full strength of the opposition. My friends decided to have a "dip" to the extent of £200. There were about nine possible runners, and a ready-made favourite among the arrivals. It looked as though they would get 5 or 6 to 1 to their money. They took the precaution to engage a first-rate light-weight jockey, promising him a present of £100 if he won. The whole of the stable money was invested on the course, and to my friends' surprise the commission averaged 8 to 1. Plus the value of the stake, it meant a win of £2000—if it came off.

The horse got well away, and at 7 furlongs had literally won in a trot. He was coming back to his field at a mile, and a feather-weight kid on a rank outsider ranged alongside. Failing to keep his mount straight he bumped into the "good thing" and threw the animal out of stride. Although the crack light-weight quickly righted his mount, he was "pipped" a short head by the favourite on the post.

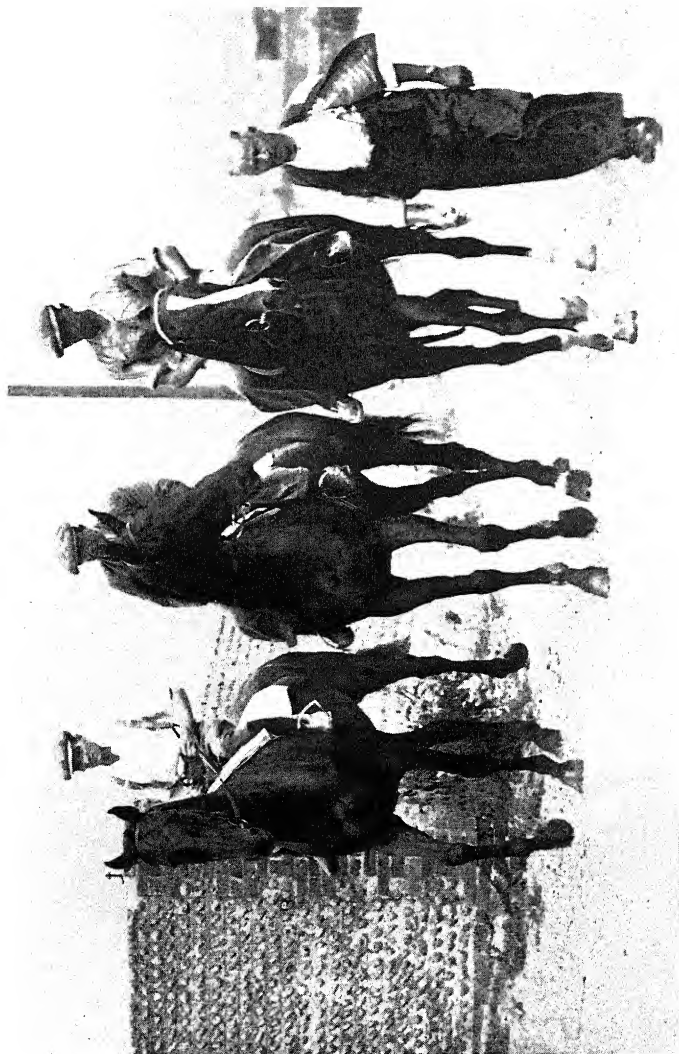
After that the joint owners were afraid to have another "go," even if they had been able to raise some "backing money." They ran him for his next engagement—a seller—and put on £50 at s.p. He won at 11 to 10, or evens—I forget which—and as they could not afford to buy him in he went into one of the big stables. The sequel is that the animal won four or

five races for his new owner, and my friends have never since seen their colours sported. Had they brought off their well-planned coup they might eventually have netted £10,000 on the animal. One small bump, by one inexperienced "jock," lost them the game before they really started.

The victory of April the Fifth in the Derby was the best advertisement the small stables have had since Signorinetta won the two Epsom classics for Chevalier E. Ginistrelli in 1908. I suppose Tom Walls is better endowed with worldly goods than many small owners, but he has a few horses in training for the fun of the thing, and comes within the category. Chevalier Ginistrelli was by no means a man of wealth, and I may also instance the late Mr. Ben Irish, owner of Papyrus, who also won the Derby. In the case of Mr. Irish, Papyrus was the foundation of the fortune he made on the Turf—owing to one lucky purchase.

The late Ernest Goby, whom I knew very well in the old days at Epsom, was one of the cleverest men of his time in placing horses to win. He specialised in "jumpers" and won many races with horses that others had given up as hopeless. George Coldbeck, who trains at East Hendred, is a man I always admire, for he has never had many really good horses under his charge, though he has been in the business for years. He did wonders with his sprint specialist, Welsh Dame. Clancy, who was formerly a crack steeplechase jockey attached to Bob Gore's Findon establishment, runs a small stable. He has been successful most seasons since he started training, and it was a feather in his cap to win the Jubilee Handicap with that consistent horse, Venturer. The trainer of Venturer is a most likeable chap, and it is always a delight to me to see one of his charges pop up. Fred Winter is another capable trainer. He also used to be a jockey, hurdles and flat coming alike to him in the last seasons he held a riding licence.

"Snowy" Whalley is always a trier. He was a clever jockey, and I am sure he would win many



[K. Brough, Esq.]

RETURNING FROM A SEA BATH

Left to right : Gay Devil, Gib and Lady of the East with Trainer Dale on foot.

Photograph

more races than he does if he only had the right horses.

I have known Jack Reardon, of Epsom, and "old man" Reardon for some years. Jack I knew when he was riding. He once bought a motor bike with some of the money he received for winning the Lancashire Steeplechase. The Reardons have always been "small" trainers in the accepted sense, but they have turned out a lot of winners, and most of their successes have been achieved with platers.

Epsom, of course, is the Mecca of the "small" trainer. There have been some "big" ones 'tis true, but for some years the Woottons and the Nightingalls have had the horses that matter. But it is the Alldens, the Barclays, the Hanleys, and the Hedges that keep the merry-go-round in full swing.

Owners come and go, but trainers train for ever. I am sure that some of the establishments sheltering a number of horses that one could count on the fingers of one hand, and then have a thumb over, must find it difficult at times to keep the flag flying.

Among the men training a few horses are some whom I should like to see with a dozen more. A dozen more better horses than they already have. David Dale, for instance, who besides training is now running a horse hospital at Bishopstone in Sussex. He trains that game hurdler Dusty for my Press colleague Clive Graham ("Bendex").

Dale was formerly a jockey. When I last met him we had a long chat on things in general, and he told me some of the trials the little trainer is up against. Also we talked of veterinary matters, a course of which I had at Abbeville during the war.

Racing has to be carried on, and it cannot thrive entirely on the big owners, for taxes and what-not are killing the goose that formerly laid the golden eggs.

CHAPTER XXIII

FAMOUS HORSES I HAVE SEEN—THE DERBY WINNERS, FLYING FOX,
SPEARMINT AND HYPERION—IRISH ELEGANCE AND SOME OTHERS
—SPRINTERS WHO HAVE MADE TURF HISTORY—BROWN JACK AND
OTHER GREAT STAYERS—BEAUTIFUL MYROBELLA

IT is obvious that of the thousands of horses I have seen it is possible for me to mention comparatively few. The humble handicappers, some of them great in their own particular sphere, must of necessity go by the board. If I sat down to write about a tenth part of them the task would never end. I should find myself drawing comparisons, and comparisons in horses or men are odious. I have witnessed nearly every race for the Epsom Derby since Flying Fox won for the late Duke of Westminster in 1899, and I saw one or two before that, but at the time I was too young to judge the points of a horse, so the least said the better.

The Duke I remember as a tall, distinguished-looking man. I have always heard that he possessed a wonderful knowledge of breeding. He was a good rider to hounds and often went to Kingsclere to supervise the training of his string, though in John Porter he had possibly the best trainer ever. He also believed in employing the best jockeys, and "Morny" Cannon was one of his favourites. It was "Morny" who rode the great Flying Fox, by Orme out of Vampire. This horse won the "Triple Crown" of the "Guineas," Derby and St. Leger. The colt started a hot favourite for the Two Thousand, and he gave a lot of trouble at the post. This was before the days of the starting gate.

As I did not see the race for the first classic I can

only repeat what I have seen written and heard others say. The start was long delayed owing to Flying Fox doing a series of bolts, but at last "Morny" Cannon managed to get him in line, and he came home an easy winner. He was the best Derby winner I have seen, but some of the old-timers always affirm that he was fortunate to score at Epsom. Holocauste, a French horse, ridden by Tod Sloan, fell a quarter of a mile from home and broke his leg. At the time he was challenging Flying Fox for the lead, and when the mishap occurred the Duke's horse went on to win with ease. Sloan always averred that he had Flying Fox beaten when his mount slipped up.

In the St. Leger they betted 7 to 2 on Flying Fox, and though Sloan hoped to win on Lord William Beresford's Caiman, Flying Fox came home with his head in his chest, pulling up by three lengths. In John Porter's opinion Flying Fox was nearly as good a horse as Ormonde and St. Simon, his two first choices among the many wonderful animals he trained.

I shall always rate Spearmint, the Derby winner of 1906, as the second best classic horse I have set eyes upon. It was not so much the way he won at Epsom, but because of what he beat. This son of Carbine was a brilliant stayer, and his victory caused great rejoicings in Australia, where Carbine was the shrine at which every sportsman worshipped. That year the late Peter Purcell Gilpin, whose son Victor so ably carries on the traditions of the one-time famous Clarehaven stable, had two horses capable of winning the Derby. If Flair had not met with a mishap Spearmint might not have been saddled at Epsom.

Flair had won the One Thousand, and they thought her sure to take the Derby into the bargain. Spearmint was to have been kept for the Grand Prix de Paris. As it was he ran at Epsom, and in the hands of "Danny" Maher, put paid to the opposition. The field for the Derby that year was one of the best that has ever lined up for the great race.

Though Hyperion was beaten at Ascot in the Gold

Cup this natty little chestnut colt by Gainsborough (winner of a War Derby at Newmarket) out of that beautiful mare, Selene, would have added his name to the "Triple Crown" heroes had he been eligible to contest the Two Thousand. His victory at Epsom was gained as easily as I have ever seen a Derby won. One can almost say that Tommy Weston had the race in his pocket at the top of the hill. His mount bowled down the straight, never shortening in stride, but quickening every yard in the last half-mile. Nothing had any chance of getting to the girths of Hyperion.

One of the best middle-distance handicappers I can recall was Jim White's Irish Elegance. This horse won the Royal Hunt Cup under the record weight of 9 st. 11 lb., ridden by Fred Templeman. Up to a mile Irish Elegance was far and away the greatest animal of his age. His speed was above the normal, and with any luck he would have beaten King Sol in the Stewards' Cup at Goodwood. Fred told me that Irish Elegance was a beautiful mount for any jockey. He had no vice, and liked to be permitted to run his own race.

Rightly or wrongly I shall always regard Sceptre as being the best filly of my time. I say this not wishing to detract from the racing merits of Pretty Polly, for whom I had a high admiration. Sceptre won four of the classics, the One Thousand Guineas, the Two Thousand Guineas, the Oaks and St. Leger. The day I saw her beaten in the Derby by Ard Patrick I felt sad indeed, for had she been her real self she must have won. I say this well knowing that her conqueror at Epsom defeated her the following year in the Eclipse Stakes at Sandown Park.

Sceptre was a marvellous mare, but she was over-raced. She started her three-year-old career in an endeavour to win the Lincolnshire. Then, even in defeat (St. Maclou whacked her), she was great. She would have won if her small jockey, F. Hardy, could have marshalled up the necessary strength to hold her together. Her owner, my good friend Bob Sievier,

that day proved himself the sportsman he has always been. He lost a lot of money when Sceptre was beaten on the Carholme, and this is what he said to his jockey : " Well ridden, Hardy ! Bad luck ! " It was after Mr. Sievier had sold Sceptre to Mr. Somerville Tattersall that I saw her at Epsom, roaming the meadows at the Durdans Stud. She then looked matronly, but withal the beautiful creature of old. She failed to throw any colt or filly approaching her own class.

When Pretty Polly won the British Dominion Two-Year-Old Stakes at Sandown Park she put up a marvellous performance. She was practically left at the post, but caught her field before they had gone half-way, and sailed home an easy winner. She won the One Thousand Guineas, the Oaks and the St. Leger, but was most unluckily beaten in the Gold Cup. We may never see her like again, and I am certain that there will never be another Sceptre. Her owner told all the stories about her worth telling in his " Autobiography," which was published in 1906. This book is one of my prized possessions. I am not going to " pinch " any of Bob Sievier's " thunder," though I am sure he would forgive me if I did.

Tetratema was one of the fastest sprinters in my time. He could not stay and I marvel now how he managed to win the " Guineas " over the Rowley Mile. Jockeyship did it, in my opinion. Tetratema is a son of the " spotted wonder," The Tetrarch, and I shall always remember that memorable race for the Derby won by Spion Kop, when " Brownie " Carslake on Tetratema and Steve Donoghue on Abbot's Trace made the pace such a cracker that they " killed " each other, and played into the hands of the rider of one of the few genuine stayers in the race.

Master Willie was running in sprints until he was aged. He was a very fast horse in his best days, but not so good as Sundridge, belonging to Mr. Jack Joel, for Sundridge carried welter weights in most of his races. In a famous match at Hurst Park, Sundridge

defeated the supposed certainty Le Blizon. When "Morny" Cannon let him out the loser never saw the way he went. Melayr (winner of the Stewards' Cup) beat Sundridge, Out o' Sight (another fine sprinter), Nabot, Dumbarton Castle, Xeny, Imperial II (afterwards purchased by Mr. Solly Joel), and others that afternoon at Goodwood. He started one of the extreme outsiders of the field, the s.p. being 40 to 1. Ridden by Will Griggs, then a 6 st. odd boy, he won in a canter by three lengths. Strangely enough it was the only race the son of Ayrshire took that season. Dumbarton Castle had won the race the previous year, bringing off a tremendous coup for the then powerful Grateley stable controlled by H. Powney. Xeny also won a Steward's Cup.

Among the other "pigeon catchers" who stand out in my memory are Friar Marcus, belonging to the King; Rocketter, trained at Beckhampton; Rising Falcon, owned by Ned Clarke; Queen's Holiday, trained by Jack Fallon; Heverswood, one of "Atty" Persse's flyers, who afterwards went into Jack Jarvis' stable, if my memory serves me rightly; Mumtaz Mahal, the fastest filly the Aga Khan has ever owned; Mediant; Whisk Broom; Eager; The Boss; Scherzo, a son of The Boss; Delaunay and, shall I say, the grey Tag End? All these horses I mention at random, without making any attempt to classify them in their respective years. If I stopped to think there are several others I should like to include.

Galloper Light was a horse who took my fancy. His greatest win was in the Grand Prix. This French semi-classic was also won in the two following years by English-trained animals—Comrade, whom P. P. Gilpin bought for twenty-five guineas, and Lemonora. Both Comrade and Lemonora were tip-top horses.

Signorinetta was a wonderful filly, for she won both the Derby and the Oaks. Her owner-trainer, the Chevalier Ginistrelli, looked as unlike a trainer as any man I have seen on a race-course. She was ridden by a then unknown jockey, W. Bullock, who must have

been the most surprised jockey at Epsom that Derby day. The filly's owner was not surprised. He had always lived in hope that his horse would win. He had dreamed of winning the Derby with her, and the hope became an obsession as the great day drew near.

I saw one war Derby, when the late Sir E. Hulton's filly, *Fifinella*, scored. I went to Newmarket for the day with Frank Poxon, the well-known *News Chronicle* writer on lawn tennis. We backed the winner—£2 apiece, if I remember rightly—and Frank got so excited that he flung his arms in the air, and knocked over another spectator who was shouting for Kwang Su as the leaders flashed by the ring. There looked like being a fight, but I calmed the aggressed one, and we drew our winnings. That was the last spot of racing Frank and I saw for some time, but we both laugh over the incident when it crosses our minds.

Willonyx I picked out as likely to develop into a great horse the day he ran third in the Duke of York Stakes. Before he won the Cesarewitch, under 9 st. 5 lb., he had scored in the Ascot Stakes and the Chester Cup. He was one of the greatest stayers of all time. The White Knight was another marvellous horse. Twice a winner of the Ascot Gold Cup (one on the disqualification of the French horse Eider, who dead-heated with him), he almost defied a record weight in the Cesarewitch, but found the conceding of nearly 3 st. to Mr. Jack Joel's *Submit* just a shade more than he could do. He, Willonyx, Zinfandel, Prince Palatine, Hammerkop, Torpoint, Jackdaw, Elizabetta, Haki, Son-in-Law and Fiz-Yama were the best stayers I can recall until Brown Jack came along to put up that astounding sequence of victories in the Alexandra Stakes at Ascot. His record, I am sure, will never be beaten. He first won the race as a five-year-old, carrying 9 st. 2 lb., and then took it five times more, which stamps him without a doubt as the horse of the century.

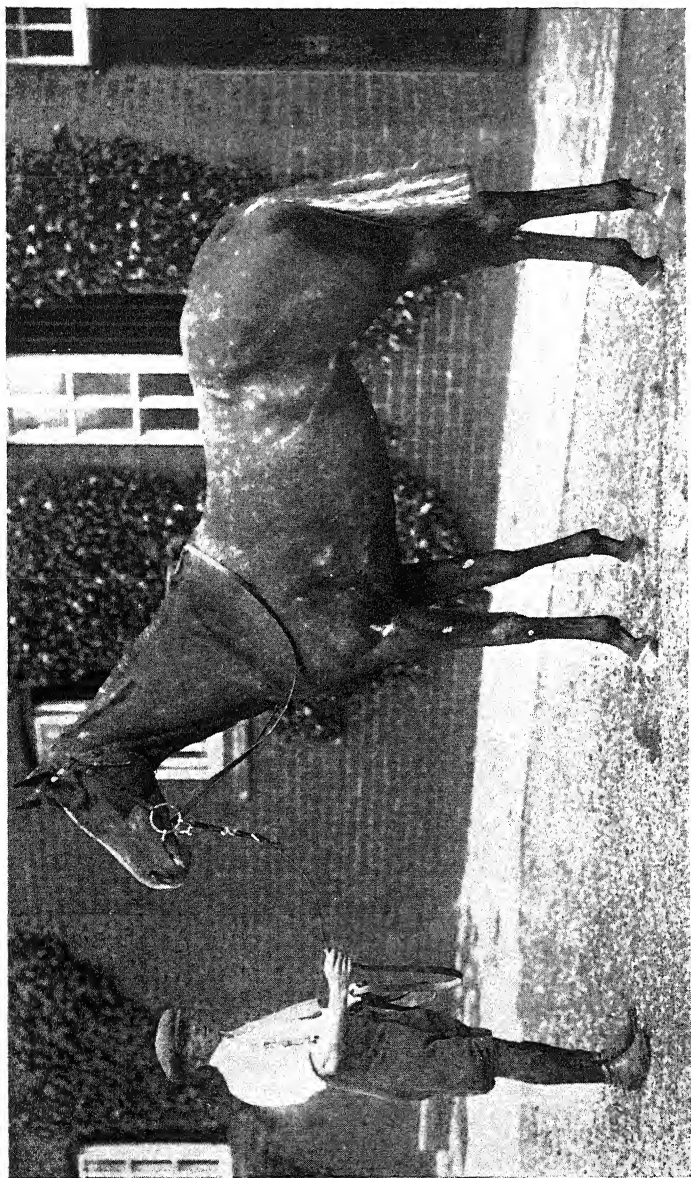
If his owner had decided to have him trained over fences when he was five or six years old, I feel sure Brown Jack would have won the Grand National. He

was a born jumper in his three-year-old days, and hurdled like a champion. All hail to him ! I rate him two horses and a half. If I live to be ninety he is an animal I shall never forget.

Lord Lonsdale's filly, Myrobella, was a beautiful mover in her fast paces. She could fly like the wind over 5 furlongs, and was able to get six as a two-year-old, but she could not get the mile of the One Thousand Guineas and her owner wisely did not ask her to compete in the Oaks. In her first season there was nothing able to hold her, and as a three-year-old she was too speedy for older horses, giving them weight. In the Challenge Stakes over the Bretby course (6 furlongs) she gave three years and 10 lb. to the northern champion Heronslea in a match, while at Goodwood she defeated Concerto by two lengths in the King George Stakes, having previously beaten the same horse, Solenoid and Heronslea in the July Cup at Newmarket.

At Ascot her two opponents, Stairway and Darag, never saw the way she went in the Fern Hill Stakes, and in her first race that season, giving away upwards of a stone to animals of her own age, she came home with odds of 5 to 1 laid on. She was only beaten half a length and three-quarters by Brown Betty and Fur Tor in the first fillies' classic, and had made the pace a cracker until the rising ground found her weakening. I rate her one of the best of her sex I have seen over short cuts. Her pedigree—by Tetratema out of Dolabella—is not indicative of stamina, but I am sure she should do well at the stud, when she may throw something the equal of herself. When she was racing she was the apple of the Earl of Lonsdale's eye. Many fine horses have carried his colours since he first went on the Turf, but so far as he is concerned Myrobella is a queen among equines.

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Photograph

LORD LONSDALE'S FILLY, MY ROBELLA

[Frank Griggs, Newmarket

CHAPTER XXIV

WHIPS ON TWO-YEAR-OLDS—YOUNG HORSES SOURED BY RIDERS'
EXCESSIVE ZEAL—CLASSIC WINNERS WHO WERE NOT OVER-RACED
—DASTUR'S UNLUCKY EXPERIENCE IN THE "GUINEAS," DERBY
AND ST. LEGER—GREAT STAYERS FOUND BY ACCIDENT—HOW
THEY SHOULD BE EXPLOITED

FOR some time I have had it at the back of my mind that one of the best things the Stewards of the Jockey Club could do in the interests of the sport of racing would be to prohibit the use of whips in two-year-old events. I hate to see any horse knocked about, but I do think when a two-year-old is whipped home in a strenuous finish the punishment is bound to vitiate the youngster's temperament, and make him disgusted with life before his career has really begun.

Many a young horse has been soured after his first experience, because the jockey in his eagerness to win has not hesitated to "spare the rod and spoil the child." I could mention several riders who never hit a two-year-old, preferring to ride him home with their hands, but it would be no use leaving it to the jockey's discretion. Jockeys on two-year-olds should be barred from carrying whips, just as apprentices are barred in races confined to these novices.

I strongly commend this suggestion to lords and gentlemen who, in their capacity as Stewards of the Jockey Club and local Stewards, do so much to uphold the prestige of the British Turf.

Few horses display vice at an early age. If they do they are not much use for racing, and are best turned out of training. Knocking them about with a whip in order to make them win gets them scared of the man

a-top. Kindness with dumb animals is the finest incentive in the world.

Jockeys may say that the mere showing of the flail has the desired effect, but I don't believe it. I have ridden many horses, so-called "wild" ones, and otherwise, but I cannot recall that I have ever hit a horse in my life. Once I had one run away with me, and I let him gallop a full mile and a half before I could pull him up, but I did not thrash him, or tickle him with a spur. What I did was this : I took him to a hill, and made him gallop up it. I took him down again, and repeated the dose again until he was thoroughly tired. Then I took him back to stables and gave him a feed of greenstuff.

That horse never ran away with anybody else.

I will agree that a jockey has to master his mount, but well-trained two-year-olds do not require much mastering. They often run "green" because they don't know what they have to do. It is the art of jockeyship to teach them the way they should go, but it cannot be done by punishment.

Some of the old-time jockeys believed in the "butcher boy" business. I have always been assured by those who knew him intimately that the genius of the 'eighties, Fred Archer, was the most brutal rider of his time. He did not hesitate to punish his mounts unmercifully, and I am sure that if any jockey adopted such tactics as blatantly as Archer is reputed to have done the R.S.P.C.A. officials would be waiting on his doorstep.

There's another thing : The horse of to-day is not so hardy as his forebears. Two-year-olds like The Bard, who won every one of the sixteen events for which he was started in his first season, are never seen. This youngster's legs were like bars of iron. It took an Ormonde to beat him.

Over-racing may sap all the vitality in a young horse, but use of the whip can do the damage in one "pop." I am against the over-racing of two-year-olds and I think the results of the most recent classics prove that

the fewer races a good two-year-old gets the more likely is he to give of his best in his second season.

April the Fifth was nursed as a youngster ; Windsor Lad was only given a few outings in his first season ; Firdaussi did not make his appearance on a race-course until July, and he was then given more than two months' rest after his first win in the Fulbourne Stakes at Newmarket. Orwell, when known as the Golden Hair colt, though beaten in his first race at Epsom in June, did not have a really hard race in his first season, while the filly Udaipur was not raced as a two-year-old.

The Derby winner, Cameronian, was retired for the season after his Salisbury victory in May ; Goyescas only ran twice as a two-year-old. Sandwich, the St Leger winner, only ran once as a youngster, and the runner-up, Orpen, had three outings in his first season.

Several other classic winners were not raced as two-year-olds owing to being backward. Speaking from memory, Hurry On was a case in point. He came on " streets " in the autumn of his second season, and doubtless would have carried all before him had he been able to run in the earlier classics.

Certain trainers are never in a hurry to exploit their promising youngsters. This has for many years been the policy at Manton, while the Hon. G. Lambton, Fred Darling, and the Brothers Jarvis are further examples of patient trainers.

Of course, in these days, when the majority of owners cannot afford to wait too long for a possible return of their outlay in buying, or breeding blood-stock, the rich two-year-old prizes are a bit too tempting to miss. They run their youngsters out for them, and " chance the ducks."

It has always been a contention of mine that two-year-old races should be curtailed. If I could afford to own horses, and money did not matter, I should experiment with a well-bred yearling or two, and decide not to race them in public until they were three.

I am aware that it is only by competing against other stables that trainers can get the "full strength" of their charges. To a large degree this is true. But it cannot pay in the long run to race backward two-year-olds, because they may be ruined for "keeps."

Wealthy owners, such as the Aga Khan, Lord Glanely, Lord Derby, the Maharaja of Rajpipla, Lord Durham, Sir G. Bullough, Sir Victor Sassoon, and Mr. J. A. Dewar, can afford to wait, and do wait. In their stables they have the trial tackle which tells them all they want to know. The Aga Khan ought to win classics, for he can breed from the best sires and retire his mares early to the stud.

It is not once in a blue moon that a really good two-year-old comes out before the end of May. Dastur was a particularly bright star. He came out towards the end of April, and trotted in for the Hyde Park Stakes at Epsom. Then he won again at the Summer Meeting at Epsom. He was one of the most unlucky three-year-olds ever foaled, for he finished second in all the three classics for colts, an exasperating experience for his owner.

During the past thirty years methods of training have altered to a great extent. I don't know why it is, but the Derby winner seldom goes on to score at Doncaster in the St. Leger. Hyperion, certainly obliged, so did Coronach. The majority of Derby winners I have seen in recent years have been deficient in stamina. The supreme test on Doncaster's Town Moor has been beyond this capacity.

I suppose, after all is said and done, staying is merely a question of degree. All sound horses can stay more or less, at their own pace. It's the speed that kills. Speaking personally, I have always been an advocate of long-distance races; there are not enough of them. I should like to see a two miles event included in every programme. I am sure, from the public's point of view these long races are popular. As a spectacle, the Chester Cup is not a thrilling affair, because there is too much "round and round the mulberry bush"

about it, but the crowd shouts, and when the crowd shouts the crowd is pleased.

Why do people go in their thousands to witness the Cesarewitch when the race is three parts over before the onlooker, without glasses, actually gets a glimpse of anything at all? Away down the course he sees a tiny speck, which gradually develops into half a dozen horses fighting for the lead.

More folks go to see the Cesarewitch than the Cambridgeshire, and they go because of their admiration for the stayer. If owners were as keen on producing animals possessed of stamina as the public is of witnessing them compete on the Turf, the glamour of cup racing would be revived.

It is an exception to see a real cup horse of the good old sort run on to his fifth season. If he wins the Ascot Gold Cup as a four-year-old, he is generally retired. The time-honoured cups are still some attraction to a few owners I could name, but the majority think it less risky to have their horses prepared for mile events and sprints. It does not pay to risk the cup preparation and the possible breakdown.

Great stayers, I fear, are not bred; they are found by accident. Some of them did not achieve any real prominence until nearing the age of five. A true stayer should be able to win the Cesarewitch in his second season. We have seen them do it, possibly after having shown ability in the St. Leger. It is not my contention that long distance races are run much faster than they used to be. The cracking pace tells the tale, and only the true stayers survive the ordeal.

Given the opportunity, there is plenty of stamina in the horses bred to-day. What about your hurdler who does his two miles over "eight flights" when it was supposed that he could not stay 7 furlongs on the flat? This generally happens when such a horse has gone into another stable, which means that either his former trainer was not sufficiently interested in his charge to persevere, or he did not know.

After a season over hurdles this horse, who had

hitherto been confined to sprinting, is entered in mile and a half events. He probably wins one, and we who write, or some of us, tell our readers that he has developed stamina with age. Developed fiddlesticks ! He had the stamina all the time.

It is easy to think poppycock. I find myself that it is easy to write poppycock. Being human I may do it at times, but there are other moments when I stop to think, when I pause to analyse a situation. The conclusion I have come to is that it is a darned sight too easy to say : " Such and such a horse doesn't stay," or that : " There are no stayers in training nowadays."

Surely it's up to the trainers to find them. And when found exploit them in races of a mile and three-quarters for a start. Unfortunately, there are not many races of this distance, but the Sandown people put up events of a mile and five furlongs odd, and, at random, Liverpool does the same. If they can run a mile and three-quarters at full stretch they can run two miles. Remembering the exploits of Cat-o'-Nine-Tails, who could just get a mile and three-quarters and no more, I don't say it always follows, but the exception goes to prove the rule.

We get the super horse once or twice in a decade. The rest—well, they are not machines that can be tuned up with a spanner and oiled to perfection. Some horses don't like hard ground, others don't like racing fetlock deep in mud ; they have their off days, and the days when they are full of beans. Also, if an animal has been trained over a mile and a quarter, or a mile and a half, he cannot be expected to shine over eight furlongs.

Years ago I used to do a lot of running, but I never trained myself on the cinder-track over half a mile when I was having a shot for an open " quarter." Neither did I run " two-twenties " when I wanted to win a " hundred." And I shall always think that what applies to the athlete applies to the horse.

No trainer can guarantee that his horses will run

twice alike, and strange transformations of form are caused by many circumstances. Old-time writers were never tired of driving home that a good horse could act on any going, or over any course, or any distance, but when they wrote of a good horse they should have substituted the prefix "super."

CHAPTER XXV

THE HIGH COST OF RACING—WHY ADMISSION CHARGES OUGHT TO BE REDUCED—LATE RACING MUST BE A PUBLIC BOON—MIXED SPORT MEANS VARIETY—BOOKMAKERS AND THEIR “BADGE TAX”—THE “RAMP” OF THE CHEAP ENCLOSURES

OPINIONS differ very strongly in most things appertaining to racing, but I doubt whether many people will quibble at my statement that the sport as carried on to-day is too costly a business to the man who earns an average income. For some years there has been a distinct falling-off in the attendances at many of the popular “park” meetings, and the added competition of greyhound racing and pony racing has driven in a further wedge. I don’t know whether race-course executives have realised this fundamental point, but to me it sticks out a mile.

Steeplechasing has never held a strong position in this country. Climatic conditions are not conducive to big attendances, and, speaking broadly, the sport provided is poor stuff, inasmuch as owners will not risk their best horses in an endeavour to win small prizes. Without strong public support, race-course companies, being practical bodies, cannot afford to increase the stake money, so National Hunt racing remains, and will remain, at a particularly low ebb.

I have no wish to pose as an alarmist, but I do honestly think that the present prices of admission to race enclosures, plus the high cost of travel by rail, is helping to keep the public away. An everyday worker can take his wife to the White City, London, or to one of the provincial dog-tracks at a total cost of something like five shillings. Many will do it for less—“all in.” He can spend a pleasant evening’s amusement after

work-hours, have a few two-shilling bets, and even if he is not successful in backing a winner, what are his out-of-pocket expenses? Ten to twelve shillings at the most. Not much dearer than taking the family to the "pictures." Could he go racing at the price? Well, I ask you?

I was one of the principal advocates for later racing, and largely owing to my efforts the three o'clock start came about. At most venues it has proved a success, but prior to the innovation a storm of protest arose. How could trainers, at, say, Newmarket, get home for the week-end, if it was necessary for them to stay until the last race? Sunday was their only rest day after a strenuous week, and the last train left Liverpool Street station for Newmarket at a time when racing would still be in progress.

I would like to know the names of trainers who habitually delay their departure from a race-course until after the last race has been decided if they have nothing running in the later races. It is the travelling head lad who sees the horses boxed for their destinations more often than not, while sometimes the responsibility is delegated to the lad who "does" a horse. If any sympathy is to be ladled out these are the people who will be inconvenienced.

Looking at the hard facts now, the objections raised were really rather ridiculous. My sympathies are with the trainer who cannot beg, borrow or steal a motor car, and has to remain in town until Sunday morning, but is he the only person to be considered in a matter which affects a multitude?

Later racing should be a real winner for race-course companies, and if they lowered admission charges into the bargain, I venture to prophesy that they would in the course of time treble their attendances. The "dogs" have proved it. We might even race at night under arc lamps. That is by no means an impossible theory. The "dogs" have proved it.

We might start at four o'clock on a summer's afternoon and finish at 6.30. Most workers enjoy a

half-holiday on Saturday and this late commencement would give them time to go home, have a meal and change, and catch the first event on the card. If the experiment of starting at five o'clock in late June, July and August were inaugurated, I am certain that strong public support would instantly be forthcoming.

I realise that there may be some difficulties to overcome with regard to the race-course companies providing facilities for later travel. I grant that the late start involves race-goers travelling at a time when the ordinary suburban traffic is at its height, but my own experience as regards London, of Waterloo, Paddington, Victoria and London Bridge stations, is that the week-end traffic is nearly as congested between the hours of noon and 1 p.m., as it is between 1 and 3 p.m. Surely there are enough trains to go round.

Some of the railway companies never quite realise how their annual receipts are swelled by race-course traffic. High fares to certain meetings, particularly Epsom and Ascot, have been in force for a good many years and no attempt has ever been made to lower them.

Ask any race-goer if he thinks that the special fares to Epsom Downs or 'Tattenham Corner' are a reasonable charge for a forty minutes' journey, and you will get a mouthful of abuse on railway companies in general. It is possible to run fast and cheap trains as the Great Western Railway has already proved in their admirable service to Newbury.

I am forced to give these specific instances to prove my contention that railway companies can fall into line in the matter of special trains if they have the desire.

I have always found that when grievances are pointed out to people they sit up and take notice, and I do not imagine for one moment that railway directors will prove an exception to the rule. At any rate, they should not be immune from criticism.

If there is a real public demand for later racing, the matter is surely worth their further consideration.

There is no question in my mind that it would largely increase race-course attendances, and I don't think that such an innovation would lead to reduced patronage by owners, and thus result in smaller fields.

However, this is rather beside the point I started to emphasise. I am all out to press home the plea for cheaper racing. There are thousands of people, fond of the sport, who would attend the meetings if they could afford it. At present the strain on their pockets is too great. Many of them were one-time regular race-goers. They have dropped out because "Kitty," vulgarly speaking, takes most of the "dough." Some of them have "gone to the dogs," and, having found this new sport congenial, and sufficiently exciting to whet their appetites for more, they will continue to patronise it in preference to horse-racing. So the stuffed hare takes the biscuit, or rather the sport-lover's fourteen pence!

Race-course executives say that they cannot afford to reduce admission charges, provide better stands, and facilities for obtaining refreshments at more reasonable prices, as their receipts have fallen, and are continuing to fall. They are accordingly bringing in the economy axe, and in the course of time the fare provided on some tracks stands a chance of being reduced to the level of "flapping." As it is, the programmes on the flat at certain meetings are poor stuff. A couple of "sellers," a £100 handicap over a middle distance, a race for two-year-olds, and two sprints comprise the day's card. There's no variety to liven up the proceedings, nothing to make the man-in-the-street say: "I enjoyed the sport, even if it cost me a bit."

At one time it was the practice at, speaking from memory, Kempton and Sandown to introduce a hurdle race into the programmes. It may also have been done at Hurst Park, but I forget. Now, here was variety, and I am sure that the casual race-goer (who might become a "regular" if he were given the necessary encouragement) appreciated it. I can see no reason why the idea should not be reintroduced. We might

have an occasional steeplechase as well. Mixed sport is popular in France, and they have it in Ireland.

Racing, of course, has become more of a business than it ever was. The after-effect of the war brought thousands into the game. There were people who thought they could make it pay, and give up work for "keeps." When their bonuses had been dissipated they went back to the slog of life sadder and wiser.

But there can be no doubt that they caught the racing fever, for hundreds of thousands of working men have their wagers on their "fancies" to-day, whereas a few years ago this universal betting was not on the same plane. Heavy betting was confined strictly to the "regulars," and most of the money found its way to the race-course. Now it is spread over a vast area in smaller stakes, about 10 per cent going to the race-course and 90 per cent to the starting price offices and the illegal gentlemen who persist in making "books" up back alleys.

When racing is cheaper, attendances should increase, especially on Saturdays, early closing days, and Bank holidays. That is logic. Just as many people as ever are eager to indulge in a day's sport in the open air if they can afford the "exes." and time. There is a lot of money waiting to be circulated on our race-courses if a far-seeing policy is adopted and when the trade of the country improves there will be still more.

Bookmakers, too, have a grievance against the high charges they are forced to pay in order to stand up in the rings to bet. The matter has been argued out and in some cases what I may term this "Badge Tax" has been reduced to a more reasonable fee. I still think that some further reduction ought to be made.

Though I hope I shall always advocate justice, my general sympathy in this matter of race-course charges is with the public rather than with any member of the various bookmakers' leagues. It is the public that largely enables racing to continue as a going concern, for despite all those high-falutin theories we have heard about keeping up the breed of the race-horse,

owners who run their animals purely for the love of the game and the well-worn "traditions" of what has been termed the "sport of kings," racing would be defunct in three months if public interest waned to the extent that nobody outside owners, trainers and the *tout ensemble* that goes to make up a racing stable cared a jot for it.

I am perfectly willing to admit that owners contribute a tidy sum in the course of the year towards the stake money for which they race, but the public at the turnstiles pays considerably more. And as everybody intimately associated with the great game, from race-course shareholders to jockeys and stable boys, from shoeing-smiths to char-à-banc proprietors, from caterers to "find-the-lady" merchants, from card-sellers to—aye, even to sporting journalists—seem to manage to live, I can only conclude that the pivot upon which racing actually revolves is not that mysterious unknown quantity "X," but to be strictly alphabetical, a vast community sometimes designated "B.P."

All things considered I have very little grievance against race-course companies on the way they treat the patrons of the principal enclosure, but from what I have seen when I have visited the various silver rings at several of the "park" meetings, I am absolutely disgusted at the prevailing conditions. The catering in many instances is worse than one would get at an East End coffee stall, stand accommodation is poor for the six shillings fee charged for admission, and congestion, caused by lack of space, prevents a big percentage of the visitors to these enclosures from seeing anything of the racing.

On some tracks there is little or no shelter from rain or wind, the stands being about as draughty places as one could find in a long day's march and the seating accommodation is totally inadequate.

Nothing is cheap unless value is given for money. The value given to silver ring patrons is pretty poor stuff. With the possible exception of two or three meetings every silver ring ought to be scrapped, stands,

buildings, and all the spare parts. The best silver ring is the one at Ascot. Newbury comes next, and I am not going to try to name a third. At one meeting I attended on a wet day the cheap enclosure was just about the best muck heap I have seen since the Germans played havoc with a certain dump on the "Flam"—Ypres road in '16.

The British public is a much-suffering race. It complains of conditions, grumbles like old Harry, but still goes on paying the piper. I hate revolutionary action of all kind. The mere mention of the word "strike" sets me agog, but I am sure if I had to do my racing in the silver rings I should turn it up, and go in for ping-pong in a respectable club, where I could get a nice cup of tea or a decent glass of beer in a clean tumbler.

The charges for refreshments are nearly always excessive. Sixpence for a cup of tea, and a couple of biscuits is a bit thick, but that is what it costs. I suppose the average race-goer does not object to paying sixpence for a cup of tea, but he does object to having it thrown at him, with slops all over the saucer, as though he was a dog waiting on the mat for his bone.

Another thing the race-goer must dislike, that is to get his beer or stout in a dirty, wet glass. On a race-course, I know, it is all bustle and confusion. No one seems to have any time to spare, but there should be labour available to wash up the cups and glasses.

Sandwiches at race-course bars are rough and ready. Some people may not object to them, but there are hundreds of patrons of the silver rings who would sooner go hungry than partake of a race-course "doorstep." It seems to be accepted that anything is good enough for people who go racing. It is not the fault of the staff, but of those responsible for the catering. The women who serve refreshments on race-courses are right down good sorts. Theirs is not an easy task. They try to do their best. I can only assume that why there is not an adequate supply of clean cups and

glasses is because some of the bars and refreshment tents are insufficiently staffed.

At some of the small jumping meetings the cheap rings are terrible places. Plumpton is an instance. It always was "a dog's hole." The silver ring at Hurst Park is badly placed to view the races on the sprint track. The accommodation and conditions there might well be improved. With Gatwick I don't find a lot of fault, and Birmingham is passable. Warwick is certainly cramped, but that cannot be helped. Leicester seems all right up to a point, and at Doncaster and York you get good conditions all round, but I would not say the same about Chester. Windsor also passes muster, and I don't imagine that any but a carping critic would complain of how the "tankers" are treated at Sandown.

Race-course companies must recognise that their silver ring patrons are well worth consideration. Dividends could not be paid on the receipts from Tattersalls, where many connected with the sport are admitted free. We racing journalists are given the best of everything by those concerned. I do not always avail myself of the privileges so kindly afforded, but even when I do I consider that I am entitled to criticise on behalf of those who are not so well off.

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CHAPTER XXVI

TONGUE-TWISTING TITLES ON THE TURF—LUCKY HORSES—WONDERFUL
DIADEM, WINNER OF TWENTY-FOUR RACES—A STORY OF KEMPTON
PARK—RACE-GOING LORE—THE “MYSTERY” HORSE—TOMMY
EDGE’S PROJECTED COUP—ILL-LUCK LOSES £15,000—FOX-
HUNTER’S GOLD CUP

WHEN “William,” the immortal bard, in one of his thoughtful moods coined that equally immortal phrase: “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet,” I cannot conceive that he had any idea that unoriginal owners of race-horses would one day take him at his word.

I am passionately fond of Shakespeare, because in my young days when I was trying to map out a career, I came to a somewhat hasty conclusion, as I have already mentioned in an earlier chapter, that I was born to be an actor. The first task I set myself during a thrilling twelve weeks’ tour with a “fit-up” theatrical company “doing” the small towns in Wales was to become word perfect in the trial scene from *The Merchant of Venice*.

Travelling a town a night on a salary of twenty-five “bob” per week—perhaps—it wanted some doing, but the Rhondda is a wonderful valley for inspiration, and by the time the company found themselves stranded at Brecon, faced with the prospect of having to “foot it” back to London, I had mastered *Hamlet* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

You will be wondering what all this has to do with Shakespeare’s rose, that, called a poppy, would please the nasal organs of the proud. May I say, therefore, that the connection is very slight. What I really started out to tell you was something interesting about

nomenclature as applied to that elusive quadruped the horse.

It seems to me that if owners are permitted to indulge in this naming business haphazard, the compilers of form books and the invaluable *Ruff's Guide* will need to take a course in Latin, Greek and Hindustani if accuracy is, as hitherto, to be the key-note of their efforts on behalf of the man who has a penchant for backing his "fancy."

From what I can gather in official circles I shall not be dumbfounded if the Jockey Club eventually steps in with a gentle reproof. It is high time that a mild form of "kicking" was administered to restrain certain owners guilty of giving what a colleague of mine on the racing Press neatly describes as "saucy" names to the animals who carry their colours. I don't like censors of anything, but it looks as though it will have to come.

It is a pretty rotten state of affairs when names of horses famous in Turf history are allowed to be duplicated. If it continues, we shall find a plater called Ormonde running in selling hurdles, and a Flying Fox contesting a hundred sovs. affair for "maidens." But this is not my main "grouse." Why call a horse Seducer? Is it necessary for an animal to run as the Tres Bonne filly? Why not call her Very Good, and done with it? Quite conceivably she may be very bad, but that does not matter a jot.

Another thing, it is not fair on the bookmakers to have to pronounce such names as Taj ud Din, La Vierge Folie, Creag-Mhor, Hadji Baba, Il Soriso de Sabato, Jayakumar, Kniphofia, Lammergeier, Phlegethon, Pomme d'Api, Wee-pei-fu, Upsalquitch, Verte Lumiere, Restigouche, Ensoleilee, Barbraonach, Chalcedonyx, Himmelblau, Schilliallion, Tchang Ti, Tetrapetalous and Trommelschall.

There are dozens of others equally as silly. I have merely quoted a few that occur to me at the moment.

Now I have a great regard for bookmakers, though they may not think it, especially when I get tens about

a 4 to 1 "shot." I can readily understand that, while they are taking three bets on Ensoleilee or Il Soriso de Sabato, they can book a dozen or more on such good old-fashioned names as Nix, Hug, Imp and Ock.

This is an age of simplicity. Clumsy names for horses should, I think, be avoided. Both Lord Beaverbrook and the Aga Khan are rather partial to appellations that, while doubtless pleasing to themselves, are so much double Dutch to the "man in the street." Lord Beaverbrook, when he first raced, could not refrain from using Canadian tongue-twisters. I never objected to the Aga Khan calling his colt Ranjit Singh when that son of Gay Crusader was running, for it conjured up delightful memories of his illustrious cricketing namesake's leg-glides. If the horse could have raced as fast as the ball went to the boundary off "Ranji's" bat, punters would have been in high glee. I had no "squeek" over Pons Asinorum, because you see racing folk dubbed him "Pons" from the start, when he was carrying the late Mr. Solly Joel's popular colours.

It has been suggested to me that some of these funny-named horses are stopped by their nomenclature. Seriously, I don't give much credence to it, but I do believe in backing up my own craft.

Presumably, Trommelschall and Co. will be running quite a lot on the flat. It is rather distressing, therefore, to ponder over the prospect that faces some of my colleagues of the Racing Press, who have to write half a column of descriptive matter, and get it telegraphed to their respective newspapers and agencies within the space of a few minutes.

And may I say this? They are not all possessed of such a superabundance of hair that they can afford to tear any out as they pen a vivid picture of how Il Soriso de Sabato was followed round the final bend to the straight by Kniphofia and Phlegethon, and after making most of the jolly old running, was whacked in a close finish by Barbraonach and Chalcedonyx. I'd make it purely a personal matter, but for fear of the

publisher telling me that I ought to visit an oculist for a fresh supply of "I's."

I am often asked if I believe in "lucky horses." I should think I do. I would far sooner get hold of a lucky horse than receive an income of £10 a week for taking up missionary work in China. I used to think that I could find one or two lucky horses every racing season, but somehow or other I have not been able to hit on a real champion of late. One really lucky horse for me was Bhuidhaonach. I only backed him twice, and he won on each occasion. The first time was when he took the Queen's Prize at Kempton. I then got on at sevens; in the early summer when he won the Manchester Cup I put £2 on him, s.p., and also had £1 "up and down" with a non-runner. In the paper I was writing for at the time I made Bhuidhaonach my best thing of the week. He started at 33 to 1.

Being engaged at Lingfield, I did not see the race for the Manchester Cup, but I was afterwards informed that the stable did not fancy their chance a yard, and further that the owner had not even troubled to go to Cottonopolis to see his horse run. And yet, when one comes to look at the cold facts of the case, Bhuidhaonach had a wonderful chance of winning that Cup on form alone.

Another lucky horse to me was Orpheus. I had £8 on him in the Derby, and did not trouble to back him "each way." He started at, speaking from memory, 50 to 1, and ran third. Now, I did not back Orpheus again until he won the Duke of York Handicap, when I had the same sum on him as I had at Epsom. He started at a long price, and "cake-walked" the race. The next time he won I backed him again, and I don't think I ever had a shilling on him afterwards.

Most punters have pleasant recollections of lucky horses. Colorado Kid, I am sure, came into this category, for when he started to win handicaps he invariably turned up at a good price, and he was always a bad horse for the books.

Going back some time before the war, there was Whisk Broom. The day he won the Salford Borough Handicap hundreds of backers made him their best bet of the day, and had the satisfaction of drawing 14 to 1 to their money.

I am inclined to rate the mare, Diadem, who was trained by the Hon. George Lambton, as a "punter's favourite." During her career on the Turf she ran in thirty-nine races and won twenty-four of them. She was a great sprinter, and her courage never failed her whatever she was up against. Her favourite jockey was Steve Donoghue. She never went for any other rider as she did for him.

To my way of thinking it is not a bit of use going racing unless you pay attention to what you see. There are, as I have said, so many stories current on a race-course that a man would "go broke" in a twinkling if he listened to all he heard.

Tips fly around and some of them are bad tips, based more on supposition than actual knowledge. Most race-goers like to be thought clever. They can only be proved clever when they pass along something that "clicks." They may pass along an unlucky one that gets whacked, but, as the proof of the pudding is in the eating, little credit comes their way for "short heads" and "necks." Of course, this is rather silly, for a beaten tip may be a whale of a tip when it is not in every Jonah's mouth.

What I wish to drum home is that one sound eye plus a bit of perception is worth a ton of "the chap who told me about this certainty hasn't given me a loser since Gladstone reduced income-tax from fourpence in the pound to tuppence."

I am afraid I am one of those funny people who don't pay overmuch attention to tips unless I know the man who gives them to me better than I know myself. But I sometimes pay a lot of attention to roundabout information which causes me to put on my thinking cap.

As an instance I recollect a good friend (and a sound

judge of racing, too) coming to me with a weird sort of tip at a Kempton Park meeting. Says he : " This may interest you. Billy Whatsisname—you know him, saddles a horse or two for Old Man Rivers when the head lad's at another meeting—has just told me that he overheard Sam Clever engaging a jockey for a horse he's running at this meeting. He heard him say : ' The trial was right.' Now I have looked through the programme and the only horse Sam has entered is Flybynight. If this jockey he's engaged rides Flybynight, don't you think we ought to be ' on ' ? " I said I certainly thought " we " ought.

Still thinking in this wise, I waited for the race to come on. Flybynight's number duly went into the frame. Sure enough, the jockey my friend named was riding. Now I suppose I ought to have gone to one of the bookmakers with whom I bet and taken a niceish wager. But I didn't. Flybynight was a 10 to 1 " shot." I say I waited. Then I did make a bet, for I saw a pretty good " head " who resides in the neighbourhood where Flybynight (which is not his real name) is still trained take ten " ponies " three times with three different bookmakers on the rails. Good enough for me to bite off a bit at eights.

In the actual race—well, it wasn't a race, for Flybynight flew by day. He had streaked home by four lengths when I asked the s.p. Sixes ! Undoubtedly the trial *was* right. It also struck me that some of that ten " ponies " three times was for Mr. Sam Clever.

Would you believe it ? There was another Sam Clever on the course that day. Bill Whatsisname, who had given the tip to my friend, didn't have a " bean " on. In fact, I might say there were three Sam Clevers, for my friend who gave me the tip, being detained in the paddock, talking to a trainer, had only just managed to get £1 on with the Tote.

Horses bear apt relation to peg-tops. The time to pick 'em up is when they are " spinning." I am told, but don't necessarily approve, that they are not always " spinning." Any old how, if they were they'd be

spun out before half the flat racing season was through.

When I was "spinning" in the days of long ago, I used to think it a clever feat to throw my top from me groundwards, jerk the cord back smartly before all the cord had unwound itself, and adroitly catch the revolving top in the palm of my hand. Ever see a jockey throw a horse from him, and draw him back before he reaches the winning-post? Not on your life.

If you want to be happy and contented at the racing game, you'll take things as they are, act on what you see, and repeat just 10 per cent of what you hear. Certain things, funny things, do happen in all walks of life. You can't stop 'em happening, neither can I.

Strange stories are told over the teacups when ladies meet for those rather exclusive little talks which (so I am told) sometimes begin with a caustic criticism of the latest shocker, banned by all respectable lending libraries, and end with Mrs. Somebody or other's reputation being picked to pieces somewhat after the manner in which I deal with my breakfast haddock on the morning following the night when I have promised to be home at seven, and arrive as the clocks are striking twelve.

The tea-cup stories, however, are well among the "also rans" when compared to the bright yarns that one is forced to listen to on a race-course. I don't know why it is, but if you are known as a shrewd "head," you have only to make a mystery about a certain horse, tell a few pals not to pass it on, and before the bookmakers have really started betting the news is all over the ring.

All race-goers, especially the "regulars," love the mystery horse. Mention of a secret trial sets your listeners agog. There may not be the slightest foundation for the rumour, but that doesn't matter. Plant the seeds carefully, and they'll spring up like mushrooms in the night. Public running is invariably ignored in favour of hearsay. I remember a case some few years ago when a horse was backed from

10 to 1 down to 6 to 4. The owner happened to be a personal friend, so I did not hesitate to ask him if "I should have my couple on *his*?" He told me that a week previous the horse had pulled up lame, but was believed to be all right, though he did not fancy him a yard. When I remarked that his horse was a hot favourite he was amazed. He hurried away to find his trainer, who was equally flabbergasted at the state of the market.

Now, had my friend not been a straight chap he could have picked up a "packet" by putting somebody in to lay against his horse, but he refused to do this, and, after the animal had finished well down the course, he went to the local stewards and placed the facts of the matter before them. He could not ask them to inquire into the form, because the horse had run exactly as he had expected, being short of a gallop. All the same, he was very upset about the betting part of the business, and thought it best to offer some explanation.

The stewards, of course, could take no official action, and the mystery remained a mystery until a certain jockey retired. Then I heard the explanation. This jockey had ridden the horse in a trial about a fortnight before it went lame, and he had given a friend the "office" to back it for him to win £5000, not knowing the "full strength," as they say in racing parlance. The commissioner also backed it for himself all along the rails, which shows that in the racing game some people can be too clever by half.

Your own judgment, that is if you have the knack of observing things and possess the acumen for reading between the lines, is worth a ton of so-called information. I know some students of the "book" who are positively uncanny. They reckon up things to an ounce, and keep their own handicaps, a task which naturally involves many hours of labour. The late Tommy Edge used to have compiled for him a wonderful little volume, which, I believe, his successor keeps up to-day. There were times when that little book

put Tommy on winners that nobody else found. In the ordinary way Tommy Edge was a reticent man, but there were occasions when he "opened out." Then it was that his personal friends learned a few things which they had not thought of.

Tommy has been missed in the Racing Press-box by a good many of his former colleagues. He never owned a really great horse but he certainly made a trainer—Bert Lines. How much Tommy would have won if Senhora had finished first instead of second in the Lincoln Handicap I should not care to estimate, but he had booked a big double-event wager—Senhora and Shaun Spadah—and the latter horse duly carried off the Grand National.

Some of the best information I have ever received on a race-course has cost me money. I once backed a horse that had been tried to have 21 lb. in hand. I picked up the nice wager of £80 to £8 to see it come with a "rattle" in the market to finish tight at 9 to 4 against. A favourable draw induced me to start to count my winnings before the flag fell. When the flag did fall my horse reared up and threw the jockey over his head. I believe the connections played for a matter of £12,000 that day, which they ought to have easily picked up.

Next time out the animal streaked home with odds of 6 to 4 laid on. I did not bet, as I object to buying money. Later on two other races were won, but the stable never got another chance to pick up long odds on that horse.

A friend of mine, who knew all about the merits of Solenoid, a couple of months before the Lincolnshire, coupled this horse with Kellsboro' Jack to win £15,000. There can be little doubt that but for rank bad luck Solenoid ought to have won the big Carholme handicap—at least, that is the opinion of the jockey who rode—Joe Canty. In that case my friend would have been able to lay off half his double. As it was, he was so disgusted that he did not back Kellsboro' Jack singly for the Grand National.

Now, many times does it happen that if you had not run into a certain person, who, with the best intent, has given you a tip, you would have backed the winner. A chance meeting on the way from the paddock to the ring can turn an optimist into a pessimist. When this happens it generally spells disaster, for all racing folk must possess the courage of their own convictions to succeed in beating the book.

When Foxhunter won the Ascot Gold Cup numerous knowledgeable backers, knowing that the stable expected the horse to win the Churchill Stakes on the previous day, when he was beaten a neck, kept off him. Of course, they argued in this way : If the owner and trainer had fancied Foxhunter for the Gold Cup they would not have run him for the other race. The mind of the stay-at-home punter took a different line of reasoning. As Foxhunter had run such a good race under a big weight on Wednesday, the owner would not run him in the Gold Cup on Thursday unless he thought the horse stood a chance.

As a matter of fact, the connections backed Foxhunter for the Churchill Stakes and ignored him for the Gold Cup. Most stay-at-home punters and many on the course did not back Foxhunter for the race he lost because they did not fancy the price, but they liked Foxhunter as a "long shot" for the Gold Cup. Excellent reasoning as events proved, but, all the same, lacking in strict logic.

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CHAPTER XXVII

THE DECLINE OF THE LINCOLNSHIRE—GAMBLING ON PLATERS—JACK
HORNSBY OF WANTAGE—JOHN HALLICK AND CHARLIE MORTON
—STORIES OF FAMOUS TRAINERS—DEAN SWIFT OF "CITY AND
SUBURBAN" FAME

SOMEBODY asked me the other day how much money I reckoned it would take to make a horse favourite for one of the big handicaps. This is a question impossible to answer, but, as betting is carried on these times, a few hundred pounds invested from the right source would certainly have a marked effect on the ante-post market. The wagering that actually takes place on important handicaps is a mere flea-bite compared to what it used to be.

Some people may argue to the contrary, but there is not a bookmaker in the ring to-day who has the desire, even if he possessed the capital, to strike such colossal bets as the leviathans of old.

I dare say an owner could win £25,000 on a horse if he laid himself out for a coup, but I very much doubt whether he could win £60,000, while any such sum as £200,000 is a dream that novelists can put up to their readers, because those who know the inner workings of the Turf condescend to grant them "poet's licence."

Among my various friends in the racing world are several men who in the days of long ago acted as commissioners to some of the big establishments known as the gambling stables. Without exception they tell me they would find it difficult to place £1000 on a horse without splitting the money up among many bookmakers. To get £500 on a 20 to 1 chance in one hand would tax the patience of Job.

Take the Lincolnshire Handicap. As a betting medium it is but a shadow of its former self. Play On was certainly backed for a lot of money, but no gigantic coup was brought off by the Mablethorpe stable controlled by Jim Russell. As for Zanoft, favourite the previous year, this horse was always at a false price. The bookmakers made him favourite when it was reported that he had been backed all over the country. In the vernacular, I think I am right in saying that Zanoft "wasn't worth tuppence." I heard that the owner accepted a wager of 25 to 1 to £25 before he went abroad on holiday, just because the odds were tempting. At that time he had no idea whether Zanoft would be fit, or even whether the horse would stay the mile, which he signally failed to do. He started at the absurd odds of 100 to 30, because there were only a handful of bookmakers in 'Tattersalls' ring on handicap day, and they were frightened to lay against the favourite.

I doubt whether there will ever again be heavy wagering in the ring at Lincoln. The money is not there to be won. Even the French stables seem to have given the principal handicap of the meeting a miss in recent years, and are content to retain pleasant memories of the Tapin and Sir Gallahad III coups.

Big sums were won by the Foxhill stable on the "Lincolnshire" when the late W. T. Robinson sent out his first two winners of this event, Prince Barcaldine and Winkfield's Pride. Captain Bewicke and the Brothers Powney took a lot of money from the ring when they scored with Little Eva and General Peace, while the powerful Netheravon confederacy were not afraid to go for a "packet" on Uninsured, trained by Jack Fallon. But to-day bookmakers of the calibre of Charlie Hibbert, R. H. Fry, Billy Peech and his partner Steel do not exist. Fry and Hibbert laid some tremendous wagers in their hey-day, and I am as certain as eggs are eggs that the ring twenty-five or thirty years ago was thrice as strong as it is now.

The sum won on a Lincolnshire Handicap to-day by the actual connections of the stable would not amount to what Galstaun, the selling plate gambler, who came here from India, was wont to risk on his platers—while I have seen Mr. Jack Joel and his brother, the late Mr. Sol Joel, go for a bigger coup in a £200 event at Sandown and Epsom.

In a way it is a fine thing for racing as a sport that the real gamblers are defunct, or have retired on their laurels. Many of them did a lot of harm to the game, and some of their so-called victories left an unpleasant taste in the mouth.

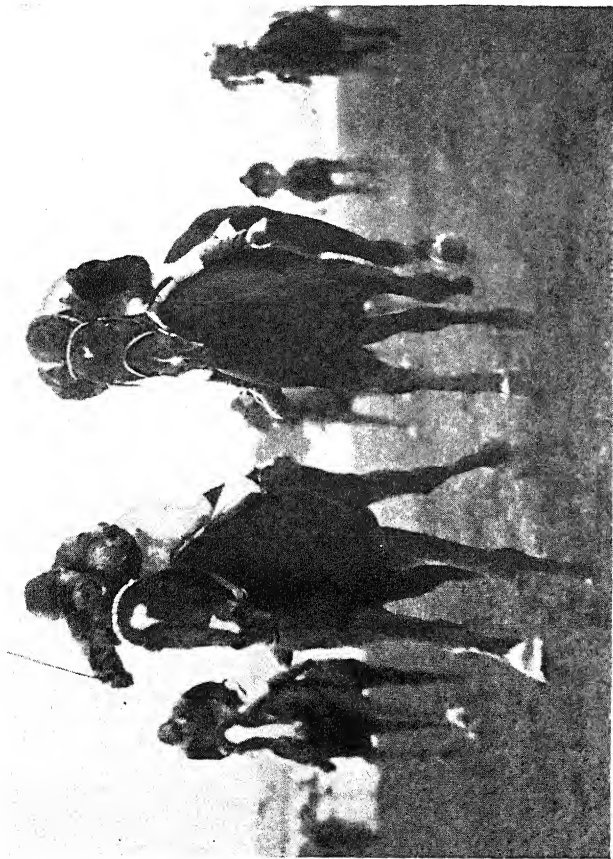
The gambling trainer has gone, too—gone with the gambling owner and the gambling bookmaker. It is not the practice to enter tip-top animals in “sellers” now for the purpose of bringing off a coup, as the possibility is that the owner would lose his horse at the subsequent auction. It is an expensive business buying ’em in when the commission has averaged something under “evens.”

In my early days the “selling plate kings” were John Hallick and Jack Hornsby.

Jack Hornsby and that swinging right leg of his. What a lad! Could he swear? Well, listen. I went down to his gallops at Wantage one day to see the early morning work, and evidently something had occurred to ruffle Jack’s temper, for he started off like this:

“What a —— fine lot I have got! I should think they send the —— to me to be —— well tamed, not trained! There you —— well go! Another —— loose, now. When some of you have —— well finished I’ll tell you what I —— well want you to do. Well I’ll be —— there goes another one! Take the —— lot back home! When you have collected the other —— we’ll have the second —— string out. Did you ever see such a lot of —— in your —— life?”

The head lad knew Jack and his little ways, so said nothing. It was better to obey the “guv’nor’s” instructions and trot the first string back to stables



Photograph]

[Sport and General

WON BY A HEAD

Gordon Richards, champion jockey, on Saint Reynard beats Arthur Wragg on Latson in the Kempsey Handicap at Worcester.

than argue. After breakfast the "guv'nor" would probably cool down a bit.

There was only one other man I have met who could swear as picturesquely as Jack Hornsby. He was Captain G——, one time of the Canadian Army, from whom I learnt the rudiments of infantry drill on the sands at Boulogne in the early part of the war. He was always calling me over the coals because I would not stand still when drilling my squad. One morning when I was marching 'em up and down the foreshore he came up behind me and roared :

"How many times have I —— well told you not to walk after the —— ? Don't move when you give your —— orders. That's right, let the —— go marching on. Don't stop the —— squad. They'll be into the —— sea in a moment and drown their ——selves and I —— well hope you'll drown your ——self. Haven't you ever heard the —— command : 'About turn' ? Then why the —— hell don't you give it, man ? "

As I write I can see Jack Hornsby's Carabine winning the Chester Cup. What a horse to buy out of a "seller" at Bath—by Carbine out of Lady Saintfield. He won five handicaps including the Manchester "November," and was only half fit when he was beaten a neck (Willie Lane up) by Scullion in the Ascot Stakes.

When Jim Fagan rode Carabine in the Nottingham Handicap Jack's final instructions to the jockey were :

"Don't forget your 'stick,' and you are on the odds to a 'pony.' "

Jim didn't forget his "stick" ; he beat the jockey on Flavus by a head in a gruelling finish.

Poor old Carabine ! He was as game as his sire. He died on the way to India where he was taken with a view to winning the Viceroy's Cup. Now the Carbine progeny is practically extinct. The twenty-two-year-old Defence, who won cups in Australia, staked himself so badly that he had to be destroyed.

If ever Jack Hornsby was going badly he'd stick one

in an overnight "seller," and plunge. It generally came off. His best handicapper was the famous Victor Wild, hero of two Jubilees, and goodness knows what other races besides. Then there was the aforesaid Carabine, Merry Shepherd, Village Beauty, Tyrannic, Prosperous, Lackford, Emsworth, Kyber Pass, The Major, Hope On, Kitty Grey, Fossicker, Trustee, Venerable Bede, Chaleureux, Montauk, Exploit II, Orris Root, Impious, Spring Hare and many others whose names I have forgotten.

I reckon Charlie Morton, trainer of the Derby winners Sunstar and Humorist, and Jack Hornsby were just about the cleverest men with horses who ever trod the old-fashioned streets of Wantage. Jack, unlike Charlie, never had the luck to have a classic winner in his yard, but despite the remarks he was apt to make about his stable inmates from time to time, he won as many races as most people.

A horse of Jack Hornsby's I recollect was a mad brute named Joe Ullman. That animal killed Ted Bewitt at Newmarket by bolting and colliding with a tree. If Jack ever used picturesque language about Joe Ullman it was surely well-deserved criticism.

John Hallick of Lambourn brought out several crack jockeys, the brothers Arthur and Fred Templeman and Fred Dainty, the steeplechase jockey, to name but three. Fred Templeman always speaks with the highest praise of his old master, and much of his own sagacity as a trainer can be attributed to Hallick's teaching. He was a hard task-master to his stable lads, but a just and God-fearing man.

Hallick did not train many notable horses, but he won a tremendous number of races in the course of a season. It used to be a maxim among professional backers of his day that when Hallick's people were betting the "hoss had gone by."

The best handicapper Hallick had in his stable was the Cambridgeshire winner Zinovia. I did not see the race as I was doing a job of work in France, but I remember sending a small commission to Bob Tyler

at Epsom for Mount William, who I am told ought to have won but didn't. Unfortunately I did Mount William for a win only, and I don't think I paid Bob the stake money until I came home on leave after the war.

Bob, a popular Epsom commission agent and owner of Ewell Lass and other jumpers, is still hale and hearty. When I last heard from him he was living on the Sussex coast. Perhaps one day I shall run into him at Fontwell Park.

Charlie Morton gave up training some years ago. He was always promising to retire after the ill-fated Humorist had won the Derby, but Mr. Jack Joel persuaded him to stay on. To-day Mr. Joel does not take as much interest in the noble sport as he formerly did. He curtailed his string when Charlie Morton retired and removed his horses from Wantage to Foxhill, placing them under the care of C. Peck.

It is not the luck of every man to win one Derby, let alone two, to say nothing of many important handicaps. Mr. Joel must indeed reckon himself a suitor of the Goddess of Fortune.

I have never asked Charlie Morton which was his favourite horse, but I know the affection he always had for old Dean Swift, Epsom specialist, twice a winner of the City and Suburban. The "Dean" was a great horse, game as they make 'em. He proved capable of winning a big handicap at Goodwood at an age when most geldings are either roaming their owner's home pastures or running in selling steeple-chases.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

WHAT A MISSED CATCH WOULD HAVE MEANT—"DICKY" CHEFFINS
AND THE "COD" TELEGRAMS—A BAD RUN OF LUCK AT GATWICK
—PAYING OUT THE LADY—WHEN THE CARMEN RECEIVED THEIR
"PRESENTS"

IT is strange how old-time melodies bring back memories of things that are not even remotely connected with music. I was listening to Hayden Coffin on the wireless, and as I sucked the stem of an empty pipe the rollicking tune and words :

"Jack's the boy for work. Jack's the boy for play,
Jack's the lad, when girls are sad, to kiss their tears away."

started me off at a tangent, which ended in a perfect maze of thoughts fighting one against the other for supremacy.

There is not a word about racing in Hayden's song, but I suppose, because he sang it at Daly's, and the late George Edwardes was then the ruling spirit at this theatre, it flitted across my mind that the man who made musical comedy also owned that famous horse, Santoi.

I was playing in a cricket match at Sunbury on the day Santoi won the "Jubilee." I recall all the incidents of the match as though they had happened yesterday. It was about half-past two when my side went in to bat. I was in second wicket down, and the "Jubilee" was to be run at a few minutes after three (there was no late racing then). With the score at 10, the first wicket fell, the next man "stone-walled" for two or three overs and came out for a "duck." At about ten to three I went to the wicket, and hit two fours and a

three off the last three balls of the over. When I had made twenty-seven I got well hold of a "long hop" and skied it. A fielder ran from behind the bowler and managed to get under the ball.

I must admit that I experienced a terrible second of agony. If he missed it I was done, for I knew that I had got my eye in and should not be guilty of taking such another chance. I was starting on the second run when a shout went up. The fielder held the ball. I was saved.

Dashing to the pavilion I threw off my pads, grabbed my jacket and, without saying a word to anybody, scampered across the field and into the high road. The horses were at the post when I paid my half a crown for admission to the small ring. I saw Santoi win the "Jubilee." It was absolutely essential, cricket or no cricket, that I should see Santoi win the "Jubilee" because I had him in a five "bob" double with Master Willie, and I had heard that Master Willie had already won the second race.

As Master Willie, speaking from memory, started at 2 to 1, it meant that I had fifteen shillings on Santoi and Santoi was a 25 to 1 chance. What a double! I can't do it now, but that's beside the point.

In those days I got a lot of fun out of racing for a little money. It had to be so, for I hadn't much money to risk. It was a case of looking for long "shots" and somehow or other the long "shots" came off.

How's this for an instance of tipping? Among my friends in Fleet Street was "Dicky" Cheffins, a well-known process engraver, who made the blocks for many of the sporting papers and illustrated periodicals. He had a partiality for having half a "quid" on a horse, but he was one of the most unlucky punters I have ever known. Thereby hangs the tale I shall unfold.

Another friend of mine, George Beech, a publisher, with a great sense of humour, came to me one morning. Says he: "You know old Dicky backs horses. I've an idea. We'll send him some wires. In fact, I've

sent the first to-day. I took a cab to Euston, and sent it from the station. You are going to send to-morrow's."

The wire he had sent to our friend Dicky at his office in a court off Fleet Street read :

"Just off to Manchester. Put your shirt on Funny-face to-day—Tom."

About half-past twelve Dicky came round to my office for his usual morning chat. After a bit of skirmishing for position he pulled out the telegram and showed it to me. "Know anything about this Funnyface?" he asked.

I had to confess that I didn't.

"You had better get on it," I said, "if the source of the information is all right."

"I'm fed up with horses," Dicky responded gloomily. He looked at the wire again. "Besides, I don't know who Tom is."

He did not back Funnyface. It won at 8 to 1. That night Dicky had a few drinks on the strength of what he might have won, and the next day I took a cab to St. Pancras and sent off this wire to our engraver friend :

"Just off to Derby. Stick it down on Camp Bed to-day—Tom."

Of course, Dicky showed me the telegram at midday, and he was still puzzling over the identity of "Tom."

"Must be one of your racing pals," I suggested. "Wants to do you a good turn. I'm going to back Camp Bed whatever you do."

Oh, yes, Camp Bed won all right, and the odds were 10 to 1. When I saw Dicky that night he was about as upset as a half-boiled lobster, and nearly as red.

"Well, if you *will* miss these good things——" I was beginning, when Dicky picked up a paste-pot and threatened to chuck it at my head.

To cut a long story short, as they say in the classics,

we sent Dicky three more wires for horses, and they all "clicked" with sickening regularity at nice prices. Then one day Dicky decided that he must have a bet. He acted on "Tom's" instructions and plunged a "quid." The horse named in the telegram was not in the first three.

After that I dodged Dicky for a solid week. Going up Holborn with my friend Beech, who had suggested the series of "Tom" wires, an idea struck me.

"Come in here," I said.

We walked into Hamley's, the toy-shop, and bought one of those little wooden horses that very small children call "gee-gees."

We carefully wrapped it up in tissue paper and sent it to Dicky by registered post. It remained on the top of dear old Dicky's roll-top desk to the day the old lad passed in his checks, and I am thankful to know that he took his gruel like a sport and forgave us our sins.

I always remember the bright spots in my racing life. And why not? Do you habitually spout about the losers you've backed? Not a bit of it! You recollect when you got 8 to 1 about a 6 to 4 favourite that rolled in; you recollect the day you went through the card at Windsor, because it's nice to dwell on these experiences, but the snorters that Fate sometimes deals out are best forgotten. Let these "sleeping dogs" lie, I say.

All the same I must tell you this story, for if the late Nat Gubbins had dressed the plot in one of his racing yarns nobody would have believed it possible.

A newly-met friend of mine, who shall be nameless because he once owned horses, was home on leave during the war. He was staying on the South Coast, and, hearing that there was racing at Gatwick, he and three other friends decided they would motor to the course. I think they had to motor in those times, as there were no trains to race meetings. There was plenty of money at Cox's, so it didn't matter if they lost a "tenner" apiece or won twenty-five of the best.

They had a tip for the first race, but my friend was unfortunate in meeting one of his old stable lads in the paddock, and instead of "having a couple" on this good thing, he stuck a "fiver" on a horse the stable lad said was "past the post." Yes, you've guessed it. The horse he meant to back rolled home at 8 to 1.

Bad start, but the day was young. In the next race my friend heard of another "cinch." He took, speaking from memory, a "pony" to £3, and the horse fell at the first jump. Then came the big race, and here he did get hold of something really good. The trainer put him wise. He took five or six "tenners"—I just forget which—from an accommodating bookmaker, and all was as merry as a marriage bell—right up to the last fence. And, hang it, yes, *over* the last fence, for his nag took the obstacle perfectly.

I don't know what caused the horse to do it, but two yards past the fence, with the next horse half a fence away, the animal carrying my friend's crinkly "tenner" crossed his legs and rolled the jockey on the "carpet." For me that would have been enough for one day, but my friend was game. He chanced a further "fiver" on another tip. It was beaten a neck.

His three chums had found some winners and wanted to get back to the South Coast, so, after a none too convivial bottle, they decided to "beat it." Before leaving the course my friend made a starting-price wager with a bookmaker whom he knew about a horse in one of the remaining races. You know, might as well be shot for a sheep as a lamb.

En route they heard that the animal backed s.p. had "clicked." "Well, that's all right; I shall get a bit back," my friend remarked. Woe unto him who makes a prophecy! On arrival at the South Coast resort the local newspaper certainly recorded that the horse had won, but it also recorded that the stewards had thought fit to uphold an objection to it.

"Unless we crash head-on before we reach the club," my friend groaned, "nothing worse can happen." He

slipped in the clutch and drove the car up the High Street like a man possessed of a thousand devils. Outside the club he ran into the girl with whom he was walking out at the time.

"Hullo," she said, "soon back. What won the big race?" He told her and she clapped her hands.

"Were you interested?" he asked. "I didn't know you backed horses."

"Interested?" said she brightly. "Of course I am interested. Didn't I give you two pounds to put on it the other night at the dance when you said you might go to the races?"

No, you could not have knocked him down with a feather, for he did not show undue alarm. In a vague sort of manner he passed his hand across his brow. In a vague sort of manner he put his fingers in his waistcoat pocket (he was in mufti). He pulled out two pound notes ("Bradburys" they called 'em then) and a slip of paper on which was written the name of the horse that had beaten his "Tishy," and the words "£2 to win—Clara."

Telling me the sad story he said: "What could anybody do? I couldn't have swung it on my own brother. All I said was: 'Oh, yes, of course. Oh yes-s-s; jolly little horse; won at 14 to 1.' Then I went into the club, cashed a cheque for thirty 'quid,' and paid her out."

Years and years ago when I knew much less about the racing game than I think I do now, I used to buy myself clothes on those occasions when I had the good luck to "tickle up" the bookmakers. I argued it out in this way: Whatever happened, they could not get back one of my new suits, or an overcoat or hat. In those days I used to bet in half-crowns and "dollars," sometimes an occasional "bob" if things were going "sticky" and my favourite wagers were "doubles" and "double stakes up and down." You stand a chance of picking up a lot for a little if fortune is kind. And I must say it was kind more often than it is now.

Most of my bets were made with a man who used

to stand at the corner of a court off Wych Street, in the Strand, not far from the old Globe Theatre. You could not find that part of London now. It has all been built over, and the old streets have gone.

I then worked on the old *Bazaar, Exchange and Mart*. We had a pretty bright staff. Nearly all of the lads backed horses, despite the mandate of the "guv'nor," who said he would sack anybody he found dabbling in betting.

Sometimes when the "old man" was in the shop a book collector would surreptitiously pass me over a telegram, or a slip of paper on which a horse's name was written. I would glance at it, wink the other eye and, as I handed it back, remark: "Sorry, we are out of stock with that book. Call next week."

The tip was then passed round the office, and when my fellow-clerks had made out their "slips," the office-boy would dash up to Wych Street via the back entrance of our premises.

When Irish Ivy won the Cambridgeshire, the combined bet of the office was something in the neighbourhood of thirty-five shillings. There was not much work done that afternoon. Luckily, the "old man" was away.

When the winnings on Irish Ivy had been drawn and distributed, some bright spark suggested that some of those who had not participated in the coup should be "stood treat." We had a number of carmen from the meat market who used to earn a bit extra by doing distributing. They called for the Friday edition of the paper late on Thursday night, and they often grumbled because the "guv'nor" never gave them a Christmas box. We decided that we would give 'em one in advance.

Accordingly, somebody was despatched to rake in all the empty bottles he could collect from a certain public-house which the staff habitually "used." He came back with about two dozen "empties" and a quart of bitter. With the bitter, and a supply of good old tap-water, we made up faked bottles to represent

rum, whisky and brandy. For gin we simply put in plain water.

When the carmen were given their "presents" they were just about as delighted as a dog with two tails. One said: "The old So-and-so (meaning the "guv'nor") is not such a mean old So-and-so as I thought. Give him my love, and say I'll drink his health."

Of course, the best-laid schemes, as Ted Humphreys would have said, will go wrong. One of the carmen happened to get thirsty while he was waiting for his supply of papers. His mate suggested: "What about knocking off a nip now? I've got a corkscrew in my knife." The cork was duly drawn, and the carman, smacking his lips, took a swig. I was not there so cannot repeat verbatim what he actually said, but I possess a fairly vivid imagination.

There was nearly a riot down the side-street outside our publishing offices. Somebody was going to be murdered. The assistant publisher said that Irish Ivy was responsible, but the carman vowed he did not care a something for Irish Ivy or Scotch Sue. He was going to punch somebody's head. As he weighed 12 st. 10 lb. and had done a bit of scrapping in the Borough, I was glad he didn't start on me.

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CHAPTER XXIX

MORE RANDOM THOUGHTS ON RACING—WHY ARE BACKERS ALWAYS IN A HURRY?—OLD FACES, NEW FACES; THEY COME, THEY GO—SOMETHING ABOUT SWINDLING BOOKMAKERS AND TIPSTERS WHO USE TRAINERS' NAMES

CAN you tell me this? Why are race-goers always in such a desperate hurry? Almost before the engine of the "rattler" has poked its buffers alongside the first yard of the platform they are feeling for the door handles, anxious to be out of the carriage. They dash pell-mell from the railway station, "scrum" for taxi-cabs and charabancs, and, if it's a case of being a bit tight in the "kick," they'll set up a gallop on "shanks' pony" in order to get on the race-track before the men behind.

There may be half an hour in which to do the mile and the odd furlong from Hampton Court Station to Hurst Park. They hurry, they scramble, they run as though their dear lives depended on clocking record. I dunno. It's easy enough to lose your money without displaying undue anxiety to shovel it into the bookies' satchels.

Sometimes the early birds get tens about a 3 to 1 "shot," but often they find that the 5 to 4 favourite drifts and drifts. Even when I am late I never risk heart-failure. I would sooner miss the first race, as I am afraid I often do. If the last taxi has been collared from the rank I much prefer to walk.

It's an old racing joke that you ride to the course and walk back. You are thus in a favourable position to watch the bookmakers lounging in their Rolls with cigars at an angle of forty-five degrees. It is rather a silly joke. On a par with the one that they are building

a new wing to Brixton Prison in preparation for income-tax defaulters.

I have never seen a bookmaker in a Rolls in my life, but I have often seen 'em in a "tin Lizzie." Also I know several who habitually smoke pipes.

Still, this hurry-scurry business is a wonderful feature of our racing life. There's a charge to the course, and a charge back. And you get "charged" while you are on the course. When I hear the raucous voices of the generous-natured cab-drivers: "Station three 'bob'!" and when I see everybody scampering for the exit gates, I sometimes wonder if they dislike race-courses so much that they never want to set eyes on such places again. But I know every man Jack of 'em will be there on the morrow.

To be a real racing enthusiast you must be an optimist. What matter if you have backed six losers, and been "put off" two outsiders which your good lady picked out with a pin? There's another day to-morrow (if it don't freeze like Billy-ho) and the bookmakers will be there with their sad faces, because they do hate to keep on taking the poor punter's money. Turn to the next day's programme in your midday paper, and weigh up the pros and cons. Ever seen the whole carriage doing it?

Certain people think it clever to jibe at the "mug punter." I have the greatest admiration for him. I admire his courage, his susceptibility, his willingness to listen to what his neighbour whispers in his ear. There can be no real harm in anybody who has such a trusting nature. He may not always remain a "mug" punter. There may be times when he is decidedly clever. Times when he ignores the advice of somebody who knows somebody who knows somebody distantly related to the trainer's second cousin, who has "spilled the beans" that the favourite "isn't out a yard." Trusting to his own sense of sight, touch, taste, hearing, smell, he goes for the gloves with the last pound in his pocket, and has the extreme satisfaction of seeing the good thing roll home in the mud.

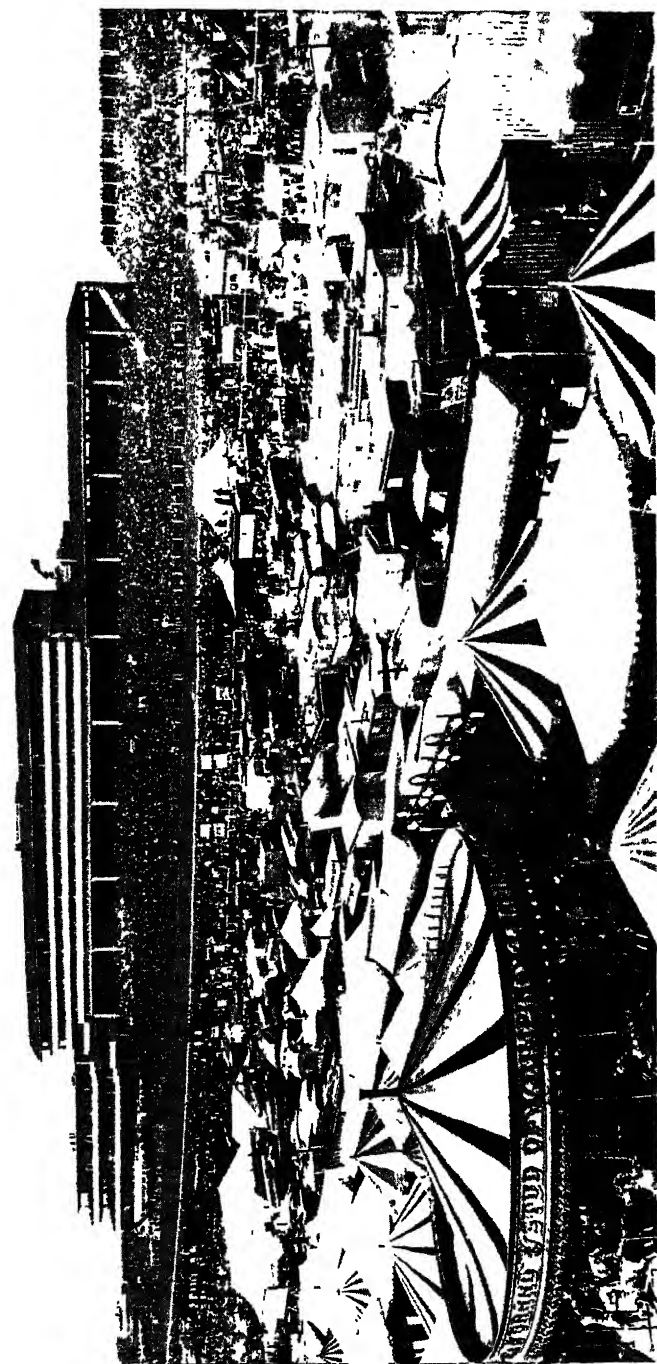
All the years I have been racing it has been a source of wonder to me how people who don't look to be worth fourpence manage to bet in "fivers" and "tenners." The "bookies" say there is no money about, but they have said that for donkey's years. I should not believe it if they went before a Commissioner for Oaths, and paid the stipulated fee. When Statesman won the Duke of York Stakes at Kempton I saw a backer draw £1080 in "ready." How's that?

Lord Whatyermaycallim may not now be able to chuck "monkeys" about on favourites owing to diminished estates, and the extravagance of his ancestors, but go on any race-course to-day and you'll see with half an eye a score of folk betting to "big money."

Many of these punters do not come within the category of professional backers. They are casual race-goers. They are there one day, gone the next, but sure as fate they turn up again and bet, so you can wager your best bowler hat that they sometimes back winners.

The racing "army" is made up of all sorts and conditions of men. Covent Garden, the meat markets, and those business thoroughfares east of the Monument send a fair contingent of backers to the southern tracks. Occasionally I see ex-Scotland Yard men "punting" on their pensions; publicans, who can get away from the bar for a few hours, dash in taxis for the last "special." I know two estate agents who, finding business bad, are regular attendants at Hurst, Sandown, Kempton, and the other "park" meetings.

There is no finer pick-me-up in the world than a day's racing. I suppose the long and short of it is there is always the prospect of a quick "touch." Some people kid themselves that they like to go racing because the fresh air does them good. I don't say it doesn't, but "tickling" up a "bookie" for £8 to £1 about a 7 to 4 "shot" is a far, far better tonic than that provided by the southern "electrics" that do the Brighton jaunt at fifty odd miles per hour for a few shillings per head.



Photograph]

Sport and General

RUN OF THE FAIR AT EPSOM
A view across the course on Derby Day

Every day the racing "army" gains fresh recruits. I know all the old faces, but am always seeing new. They come ; they go. Some last at the game for months on end ; others have a hectic fling, and fade out of the picture. They say that luck comes to everybody. I am sure it is right. He is a very wise punter nowadays who knows when his luck is on the ebb.

I think if backers of horses would realise that the odds are always in favour of the bookmakers their chances of winning "on balance" would be considerably increased. It is this everlasting "going after losses" that enables bookmakers to live.

A bookmaker friend of mine once laid 50 to 1 against a four-year-old one of his punters wanted to back for the Derby. When I remonstrated with him, pointing out that, in my slim opinion, the transaction was blatantly dishonest, he merely retorted that it was his vocation to lay against 'orses, and he never worried his 'ead about their hages or whether they had three legs or four. And he had never betted with Mr. J. H. Thomas !

Of course, the fault is the fault of the punter alone. If a "flat" is content to make crazy bets there are always a few "sharps" ready to accommodate him. Ignorance is folly, but no sin. I am not one of those who think that fools should remain unprotected. The law of betting, however, is to the effect that if you cannot win you cannot lose. That is one reason why when a race is abandoned all double event wagers are void no matter whether the first horse has lost or won.

The temptation to "beat the market" wants a deuce of a lot of resisting. I am afraid most punters like to be thought clever. It is one of the frailties of a sportsman's nature. £1000 to £1 was taken by a very good sportsman that he could swim the Channel. In this case he knew his own strength, or, in other words, had stable information. When you are in this position by all means take a 200 to 1 "shot." You are backing your knowledge against the bookmaker's.

Most bookmaker's lists are compiled by people who

are not merely excellent judges of a horse's form, but who know a thing or two of what is going on behind the scenes. They know when a horse is doing the right work, and animals they price at 100 to 1 or more can generally be "put out with the washing."

This is called "marking the card." I have yet to meet a bookmaker who hasn't had his card "marked" by somebody, and in many cases the "somebody" is himself. Mixing, as they do, with the right people, knowing, as they do, the stable commissioners, it stands to reason that their knowledge of what's what must be much greater than the average punter's, with all the information he obtains from reading the sporting papers, and what he sees and hears when he goes racing.

Bookmakers, that is course layers, are out racing every day. Many of them run starting price offices, so their managers and clerks "at home" know as much as they do. If only for the fact that the bookmaker knows all the horses that are being backed, and who is backing them, his position must be stronger than the punter's.

With some of the office bookmakers who advertise extensively, it is still a case, I fear, of "heads I win, tails you lose." I am compelled to make this observation, because I constantly hear of instances when "bets by post" punters have been "ditched" in the most blatant manner.

I know if bookmakers did not have rules they would stand to be shot at, but I have never come across such elastic rules as those which flagrant defaulters thrust down the throats of complaining clients when faced with facts beyond dispute.

The main thing about betting is that a backer ought to know whether he is "on" or not. Many of the advertising bookmakers in Scotland permit clients to send wagers on the day of the race providing that the letter containing same bears a postmark not later than midday. It is a rotten system. I will go as far as to say that I should like to see ready-money betting by

post made illegal in Scotland just as it is in England. I am sure there is more "twisting" done by certain unscrupulous office layers than you get in a month of Sundays with bookmakers who take "slips" in the street.

The street bookmaker has to be honest ; otherwise he would lose his connection, but the advertising bookmaker can "diddle" the public until the cows come home, knowing full well that he can find a fresh "mug" every day.

I could quote many specific instances of downright robbery. Here is one : A client of a certain bookmaker I could name, after losing £9 sent a bet of 10s. each way on a Derby winner. He sent the bet on the morning of the race, posting the letter when he went to work at eight o'clock. As he did not receive his winnings he wrote, calling attention to the matter. A week elapsed before he got a reply. He was told that they could not trace the wager, and asked him to send further particulars.

Of course, the letter might have gone astray, but it is curious that the bets which have an uncanny knack of going astray are winning bets. Losing bets are always received.

My contention is this : There is nothing to prevent dishonest bookmakers from destroying all postal orders, or money orders, received on winning horses after the result is known, and sticking to the spoils on losers. Of course, they are clever enough not to pay into their banking accounts postal orders they intend to dispute having received. They destroy them with impunity.

Betting on these lines is a sinecure. If one office gets too hot, it is an easy matter to open another in a fresh town. I know several perfectly honest bookmakers in Scotland, but there are many crooks, and the tricks they play react on those layers who pay their just dues.

I heard about an instance of a client of a firm of bookmakers, whose advertisements I still see in several papers, being blatantly welshed for his winnings on a

horse that came home at 10 to 1. He sent the bet by registered letter, and instead of receiving his winnings the stake was returned to him with the curt explanation that he had broken the firm's rules. It appears that his usual stake was £2 and there was a rule (which he knew nothing about, by the way) that sums of more than £1 had to be sent off the night before the race.

He wrote to the firm, pointing out that he had previously sent about half a dozen losing bets of £2 on the morning of the races, and these apparently had been "on." The reply he received was to the effect that the rules had been recently revised. They were sorry he had not received a copy.

Now what would an honest bookmaker have done in this case? I think he would, and should, have told the backer that he was "on" only to the odds of £1 instead of £2. That, at least, would have been a fair way of getting over the difficulty.

I told the punter in question to suggest to the bookmaker that this was the right settlement. He never received any reply to his letter.

Bookmakers who "bilk" backers on ready-money bets often have sumptuous offices, and a big staff of clerks, but there are many smaller fry who flit from place to place like the bee, who, after drawing all the honey from the poppy, gives the columbine and the petunia the suction of his fiery tongue. Unlike the bee, these scallywags are of no utility to mankind. They thrive, and get rich on the "mug" punter.

The real remedy is in the hands of backers. They should refuse to do business with bookmakers about whom they know nothing. Don't be misled by a cleverly worded circular. I know men who make a pretty good living by writing "puff" stuff for bookmakers and purveyors of pills. Genuine bookmakers generally refuse to open accounts until they have been provided with sporting references, or a proposed new client has been introduced by somebody whom they know. It is a sound system, because defaulting backers are by no means extinct.

The bookmaker who offers an unknown person a credit limit is the man to avoid, speaking as a general rule. He may pay, but he may not. There is nothing more annoying than backing a winner, and not getting your just dues.

The advertising tipster "ramp" is another menace to peace and goodwill towards mankind. Just as there are honest advertising bookmakers so are there honest tipsters, but they are few and far between. I know a few whose daily methods ought to land them in the hands of the police.

These gentry are swindlers, of the deepest dye. They pick a handicap with eight possible runners, and send out to their clients every horse. One for the clients in the East, another to clients in the South, a third to clients in the West and a fourth to clients in the North. The remaining runners are cleverly sorted out for the benefit of those in the South-east, North-west, etc., etc. All the points of the compass. What a game! Give winners? Of course they give winners—to a certain section. By this method seven-eighths of the clients must always draw a blank—unless there is a dead-heat.

Some advertising tipsters are blatant in their audacity of using names well-known in the racing world. Trainers' names, jockeys' names. They have no more right to them by birth in the majority of cases than I have of proclaiming myself Winston Churchill.

If I owned a newspaper which accepted tipsters' advertisements I should give stringent orders to my advertising manager that any such advertisement bearing a name similar to a well-known trainer's or jockey's should bear a line in parenthesis underneath, worded in this way:

"No connection with the trainer (or jockey) of that name."

This would prevent many ignorant people who answered the advertisement from believing that they

were dealing with somebody connected with a racing-stable. I admit it would be rough on any tipster who happened to bear the same name as a well-known trainer, but that cannot be helped. My logic is that the majority should benefit in all things, not the minority.

There is nothing more annoying to trainers and jockeys than to see their names printed in bold type in newspapers, for a purpose that can only be for the delusion of the public. An initial does not matter in a name. To the uninitiated "Bob Gilpin" or, say, "Bill Butters" is bound to be misconstrued by somebody or other. These are household names, names known and respected in the racing world.

What does the "mug" punter think when he sees them in print in connection with an offer to send "a racing certainty" for Sandown?

I'll tell you what he thinks. He thinks that "Bob Gilpin" *must* be some relation to Mr. Victor Gilpin, who trained Colorado Kid.

And that is exactly what the advertising tipster wants him to believe.

CHAPTER XXX

MAINLY ABOUT HOLIDAY RACING

IF I can dodge holiday racing I dodge. I get so much of the sport of kings from January to December that thoughts of Easter, Whitsun and the first Monday in August always make me determine to poke about with a fork in the garden. After I have been poking about until lunch is on I generally catch a 'bus or a train to Kempton or Hurst Park, and lose a pound or two on the first race.

I have heard bookmakers say, when the favourite wins, that there oughtn't to be a last race. I have come to the conclusion that there oughtn't to be a first race. It is a fatal ditch that I seldom successfully negotiate without damaging my pocket.

Holiday first races are more often than not lures for the unwary. You go on the course full of hope, optimism oozing out of the pores of your skin, and, when you take "threes" about a "gee" that looks like starting at 6 to 4, it goes to "sixes" offered. If the animal opens out at 6 to 4, and you, having heard somebody say, "Not a yard—the favourite," plank your stake on something else, your original choice comes to 11 to 8 on, and streaks past the judge's "stick" ten lengths in front of the nearest opponent.

It is rotten at all times to lose your money, but when you get wet outside and wet in, as you are apt to do at holiday times, it is no consolation to hear the missus call you pretty names such as "Duck" or "Dinkie" because you *would* go racing instead of taking her to see "For the Sake of her Child" at the local kinema.

I think my worst experience at a holiday meeting at

Kempton Park was when I went down with a pal many years ago. I was not very well "breeched" in those days, and, having taken one of those "best girls" for a river outing on the Good Friday, I found myself about eighteen shillings "strong." Not a ton of money to play up on the "gees."

It started to rain when self and pal were at Waterloo Station, and it poured in torrents all the afternoon. To save unnecessary expenditure we decided to bet "outside." On the first race we risked a couple of shillings apiece. The horse duly obliged—it was Orris Root, one of Jack Hornsby's selling-plate "certs" as far as I can remember—and we drew the then large sum to the odds respectable bookmakers pay out on 4 to 1 "shots." Unfortunately our bookmaker was not worthy of respect, for he went "bust" first "pop."

Certainly a bad start, but we were not so malign as to lose entire faith in human nature. Having taken him at his word that he would send the "doings" on to the address we gave him, we picked out another "cinch" in the second event, and, after a long search round the layers' pitches, succeeded in getting "fives" to a "dollar" about a 2 to 1 chance. It romped it. In fact, I may say it slid past the post while the other runners were apeing crabs. I fancy it was the only animal among the lot that could swim.

While the rain came pitter-patter down we went in search of further plunder.

There was an alleged "cast-iron" in the third event. My pal had heard all about it from somebody who knew somebody whose second cousin was courting the third cousin (on the wife's side) of the trainer. Surely such a selection, based on such inside knowledge, was worthy of a bit of gold. We betted in "bits of gold" in those days. At any rate, a jolly old "quid" went on this "cinch," and while I watched the race, my pal (having had some) kept his "lamps" on the bookmaker. Why suspicious people have these extraordinary ideas about bookmakers I don't know.

My pal, however, said he'd been racing before. It was his idea, watching points, not mine.

When I got back to the pitch there he was as large as life, and almost as wet as a half-drowned water rat, holding out his fist for five of the best and brightest, which the bookmaker "chinked" into his palm.

We were now going strong, and knew it. If you can back three winners, and get paid over two, you can go through the card. Having listened to several race-course tipsters, and successfully dodged an obliging individual who borrowed a pencil and suggested he should put on a couple of pounds for us "in the paddock" on something that could fall down and win the next race, we decided we had made enough to pay our admission to the small ring.

I must tell you that my pal claimed to be an authority on the race-course. Consequently I rather looked up to him. He said he could tell when an animal was "spinning" by watching it go down, and then having a look at the "market." I have since come to the conclusion he was talking rot. I've seen horses go down like cats on hot bricks; I've seen 'em come back like greased lightning. I've seen 'em knocked out to "tens," and win in a canter; I've seen 'em backed from 8 to 1 to "Go and scratch yourself!" and they've had a job to keep out of third place.

Still, this has nothing to do with us going into the small ring. What has to do with it is that we ought *not* to have gone into the small ring. That may sound obtuse, but I guess you'll gather what I mean in the next paragraph or so.

We went into the small ring, and——. That's where you're wrong. It did not change our luck, not by long chalks. Not only did we find the next winner, but the one after. At the end of the day we started to push our way towards the exit gate, gallant winners of over fourteen pounds.

"Good biz," said my pal. "Seven quid apiece." He was holding the "bank," and he pulled his thoroughly soaked cap down over his left eye, and

strode through the slush after the manner of a Douglas Fairbanks. Clear of the immediate mob, he said : " I'll give you your whack." He dived into his hip-pocket. A horrible look spread across his features—almost from ear to ear. " Some blighter's hooked the lot ! " he gasped. You see, when he dived his hand into his pocket there wasn't any pocket in which to dive it. Somebody had been rather adept with scissors or knife, and cut the pocket out.

Now let me put the " spot white " on another little holiday episode. I took Charles Grave, the *Punch* artist, to his first race meeting. He had a job of work to do for one of the illustrated weeklies—a page of racing sketches. I don't think he had ever had a bet in his life, but, being in Rome, he determined to do as Rome did. Said he to me : " Old son, I'm going to have half a dollar on number 2 on the card." I told him I fancied numbers 4 or 6. " Right," said he, " you back 4 and 6, and I'll back 2. We'll share the winnings." We made our bets, and waited for the " off."

The horses flashed by. All we could see was a flourish of whips, and about three jockeys' caps. Came that sudden lull, when everybody around was assuring his neighbour that such and such a horse had won and the neighbour was affirming that some people ought to take their grandmothers with 'em when they went racing.

From somewhere a cry was heard : " I've got 'em—two, four, an' six." Charles Grave turned to me, and murmured : " What picking ! We've backed the first three. Let's go and draw."

To a bookmaker with a very cheery face he handed up his ticket, mildly suggesting that twelve-and-six would meet the bill. " What's this ? " roared the " bookie." " Backed number 2, 'ave yer ? Well, number 2 ain't won. I may be cross-eyed, but all I can see is number 15 in the frame, with number 8 an' number 10 under it. 'Ow long 'ave you bin racin' ? "

The gentleman who had called lustily : " Two, four

and six," was a seller of fried fish. These were the prices of his wares !

Travelling about the country to race meetings one gets to know a good many of the railway companies' servants. Here is a little story of ticket dodgers which I heard the other day. I won't say where it happened, in case my friend the ticket inspector, who gave me the details, gets "called over the coals" by headquarters.

At a certain station near London most of the race specials to the terminus stop. On one occasion half a dozen people alighted. My friend on the barrier asked the first passenger passing through for his ticket. The man merely jerked a thumb over his shoulder. "It's all right, mister, he's got 'em." A second passenger passed through the gate making a similar remark. And then there came two others, each saying : "He's got 'em."

To the fifth man, who handed up one ticket, the inspector said : "Here, what about your four pals in front ?"

"My pals ?" was the astonished reply. "I've got no pals."

"Your pals, who have just gone out, all told me that you've got their tickets"

"Well, I haven't, and I don't know them," came the indignant rejoinder.

Of course the little "breeze" ended in a visit to the stationmaster's office, where the stranger was able to satisfy all concerned that he really did not know any of the four men. And doubtless, ensconced in a little pub I could name, which is just outside that station, four clever "ginks" were assuring themselves over tankards of bitter that the "briefs" (if they had any) would come in handy for the next meeting.

I came back from Doncaster with a man who had won £1500 on Tracery in the St. Leger a few years ago. By careful backing he turned the money into £7000 and bought a pub. In the course of time he owned three pubs in South London. To-day he sometimes has to hide himself under a seat until the tickets

have been collected in order to get back from a meeting. His downfall was caused in this way. He got it into his head that he had bought the pubs to drink in himself, and the customers consequently went short of beer.

Another regular race-goer I know has adopted a novel method for making certain that his wife gets money he sends her from time to time. It worried him a bit that the "spondulicks" might get lost in transit.

When he has a good day he puts £10 or £20 in notes in an envelope, directs it to the lady and drops it in a pillar-box unstamped.

I said to him: "Why don't you register it?"

"Not blooming likely," was his rejoinder. "My way is safe and cheap. When the Post Office gets hold of an unstamped letter they hang on to it like grim death until somebody has paid 'em the threepence. Unstamped letters never get pinched, the postman's guv'nors see to that."

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CHAPTER XXXI

AND WHAT OF THE TOTALISATOR ?

I HAVE particularly vivid recollections of the day the Totalisator was established at Newmarket. It became a working proposition after many months of talk, in which the "Ayes" and the "Nays" had fought wordy and windy warfare over the merits and demerits of machine betting.

When the first windows were opened in the little square-shaped, green-shuttered structure on the right-hand side of Tattersalls' ring, people present clustered round and stared at it in awe. He must have been a bold man who registered the first wager of a 2s. unit—or maybe it was a woman.

That afternoon the bookmakers could not strike a bet. Professional backers stood in little groups in the enclosure, all eyes on the indicators. To them the "Tote" was something in the nature of a freak—a new toy. They wanted to know how it worked, and I am sure if the officials had permitted, they would have poked about inside the building, prodding a wheel here, unloosening a screw there, just like a six-year-old kid with a new mechanical engine.

The bookmakers, after about the third race, became "fed to the teeth" trying to attract clients. They offered all sorts of tempting odds against runners, but apparently nobody wanted to bet. The casual racegoers present betted with the "Tote," the professionals watched them draw their winnings.

Somebody went to the "change" window and got paid ten one pound notes in exchange for a "fiver." Somebody else drew £24 odd, or it may have been

£14 odd, from one of the pay clerks on a winning ticket when he ought to have received £4 2s. 6d. That did it! The "boys," hearing of these discrepancies, came to the immediate conclusion that the "Tote" might be useful after all, for apparently it would be "diddled." They started to evolve schemes for getting a bit "on the quick."

Meanwhile, the bookmakers, tired of shouting the odds, left their pitches and joined the throng of backers gazing at the "Tote." It was indeed a great day when machine betting was given its initial run at Newmarket.

A horse called The Bastard won for Lord Rosebery. The s.p. was 100 to 1. I forget what the "Tote" paid out on this outsider, but I remember writing at the time how nicer it was for the women present to go up to a selling window of the Totalisator and say: "One ticket on No. 2, please," rather than make their wagers with the bookmakers, as they would have had to name the horse. I was strongly of opinion that this unpleasant nomenclature ought to be changed, but the horse remained The Bastard up to the day he was retired from racing, so my efforts on behalf of what I believed to be backing up public opinion proved futile.

When the first "Tote" was established, I and others said that it would not attract the professional backer. There are many hundreds of professional backers doing the round of the meetings day by day, week in week out. The majority bet in "fivers" and "tenners" and occasional pounds. I know many professionals—I term them professionals because they do nothing else for a living but back horses—who bet in smaller amounts. Then there are the big men, who bet principally with the layers on the rails. They will have fifty or a hundred pounds on a horse, or more, when the occasion warrants it.

So far the "Tote" has received very little of this professional money. The "pros" don't like machine betting, the chief reason being that they cannot beat the market. If the "Tote" is in existence a hundred

years, I doubt whether professional punters will forsake the bookmaker.

Most of the money that goes into "Tote" pools comes from the casual race-goer. I don't know, but I fancy the "Tote" gets quite a number of ten-shilling and pound notes from some of my colleagues in the press-box.

A good many owners and trainers have an occasional flutter on the machines, while the members' enclosures at all meetings which have Totalisator wagering provide their full quota.

Most women who go racing bet with the "Tote." They can make their bets themselves, and have the pleasure of drawing winnings at the little windows. It is all very good fun. But the main point is, unless I am grossly misinformed, that the "Tote" will never be a huge success on its present earnings. Because I don't want to see the "Tote" fail, I sincerely hope further consideration will be given to the much-discussed bets-by-post idea. One of the excuses the Control Board puts forward is that postal orders sent to the course may go astray. This is the first occasion I have heard of a business firm—and the "Tote" is a business firm—casting such a reflection upon the post office. How many letters do go astray in the course of a year? Not sufficient to make a bonfire in the front-room grate.

When the "Tote" was established, I thought some of the absurd regulations as to gaming would crumble away, but it seems it will not be so. So far as betting is concerned in this country there will always be one law for the poor and another for the rich. I know that many suggestions have been turned down on legal grounds, but there seem to be no legal grounds about bets being sent to race-courses.

The people who don't want this to come about are starting price bookmakers, because they imagine it would ruin their businesses. That is a strong point and open to discussion. There are, I venture to assert, many bookmakers running large s.p. offices

who would find a way out of the difficulties with which the Betting Control Board is faced on the "bets-by-post" scheme.

When the point was first raised the Betting Control Board stated there was no legal difficulty if bets sent to a race-course related to races which were to take place on that particular course, races to be run on the day the wagers-by-post were received.

Naturally, before such a scheme could be put into operation it would be necessary to greatly increase the "Tote's" travelling staff. Still, added income warrants additional expenditure, and it seems to me that unless the "Tote" obtains far more money than is at present coming into the coffers the time must come when the whole bundle of tricks will have to be written off as a failure.

There can be no doubt that the "Tote" has not proved a howling success despite the huge sums that were taken at Ascot. It has yet to be properly established at Doncaster, where it will take as much money as it has taken on the Royal Heath. Elaborate machinery has been scrapped, thousands of pounds being thrown into the muck heap. And the Betting Control Board is still experimenting.

Apart from the fact that we haven't yet been provided with the perfect "Tote" an enormous amount of money has been spent. And a lot more will have to be spent on installation at courses not yet adequately touched. Then there are the present overhead charges. I presume that economy is being exercised in various directions. I am not criticising the Control Board on the expenses account, because everything has been approved by those responsible, and they are naturally quite prepared to stand by it.

Fresh money must be found if the present percentage of deduction is to remain in force. Where is it coming from? The half a crown punters like the "Tote." They will rally to the call like a troop of Boy Scouts, but they must be given the opportunity and inducement. As a staunch advocate of the

"Tote," I want to see it thrive. It has the support of the Jockey Club behind it, and I am sure that those immediately concerned are doing their best to solve the many problems that are bound to arise.

Great improvements have been effected since the first "Tote" was put into working order and members of the Control Board have survived the condemnatory criticism that was levelled against them in the early days. They are tryers all the time, but I cannot help thinking that the people best qualified to give expert advice are not called upon by the Control Board to express their views.

When the "Tote" was first established prominent racing men, including members of the Jockey Club, seemed to take it for granted that machine betting was going to solve the problems which face, and still face, every race-course company in the country—that of decreasing profits. Some, in their advocacy, made no bones about suggesting that bookmakers would have to be banned in favour of the "Tote." I said at the time that everybody who argued on these lines would be biting off more than they could chew. I don't imagine there is one backer in twenty who would like to do away with the bookmaker.

I have seen the "Tote" working in various countries. It has never been entirely satisfactory from the public's point of view, and, all things considered, I must confess that I have heard far more arguments against it than in its favour.

I grant that the Totalisator does add to the public's enjoyment, but I very much question whether those who attend race-meetings would care to bet solely with the pari-mutuels.

When I was in Ostend a few summers back, it seemed to me that the handful of bookmakers present did a rare lot of business, especially with the English visitors. Some of these visitors professed to be "fed up" with the "Tote" because they had to wait such a long time before they could collect their winnings at the various paying-out offices. Also they had but

a vague idea as to what price was going to be returned about a winner.

Staunch supporters of the Totalisator have always maintained that the machine returns bigger odds against outsiders than the bookmaker. It is so in some cases, but these instances of very long odds are few and far between. When they do crop up they get tons of publicity, but of course we hear nothing about it if the machine returns a couple of points under the bookmakers' prices.

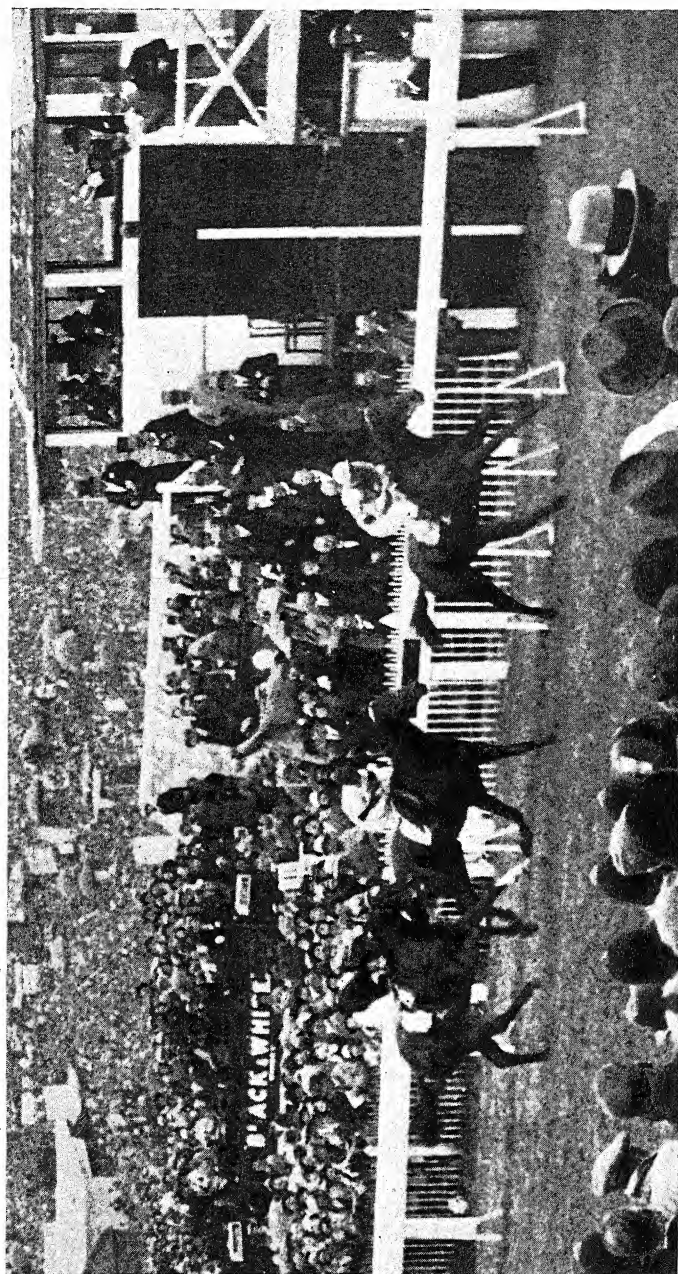
The first thing a Colonial notices when he goes racing in England is the reluctance of backers to support more than three or four horses in any average race. Now, in Australia, I am told, it often happens that many animals are soundly backed in a field of twenty. On the Continent, too, apart from the actual favourites, the pari-mutuels take a lot of "field" money. In other words, fewer horses are backed here by the public than is the case in other countries.

Most backers wait until the market "tells the time of day" before making their wagers, so it often happens that the principal layers find themselves loaded up with money for one or two horses, while they have not taken a penny for the rest. The "Tote" is in the same position, so I cannot for the life of me see how better prices will be returned.

Any shrewd backer who wants to put money on an outsider is perfectly aware that by exercising a little patience he can generally get a few points over the probable returned odds from some layer or other in the ring. Often a horse is, rightly, returned at, say, 100 to 6, because some of the big men on the rails have actually laid this price at the "off," but how many backers have secured 20 to 1 to a pound or two on the outskirts?

With the Totalisator a backer will never be able to beat the market. That is why I maintain that to exclude bookmakers altogether would be adopting a much too drastic policy.

It is up to the bookmakers to see that they are not



Photograph]

WINDSOR LAD WINS THE DERBY FROM EASTON AND COLOMBO

[Sport and General

wiped out by the advocates of the "Tote". So far, machine betting has not hit the starting price offices to any extent, but I think that bookmakers could safeguard their interests if they were more enterprising.

Ante-post wagering as we used to know it is as dead as a door-nail. The "market-riggers" killed it when they started in to foist false favourites on the public. The only races to-day where ante-post wagering is quoted are the Lincolnshire and Grand National, the Jubilee Handicap, the Derby, Royal Hunt Cup, Stewards' Cup, Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire. The Chester Cup is now entirely ignored until the day of the race, the City and Suburban no longer attracts the takers of long odds, and such important events as the Queen's Prize, the Great Metropolitan, the Ascot Stakes, the three Liverpool Cups, the Manchester Cup, the Newbury Cups, the Northumberland Plate, the Goodwood Stakes, the Portland Handicap at Doncaster, the Ebor, the Prince Edward, the Duke of York Handicaps, the Derby Cup, and the Manchester November Handicap are merely "post" affairs.

Punters will bet on all these events well in advance, providing they get fair odds. In the North the "list" men do a fine trade on "futures," but there are no published quotations that might be termed "official," and many thousands of backers do not get the opportunity of taking a price about their fancies, for the simple reason that they do not know what horses are engaged.

Most backers to-day are pretty shrewd. They don't throw money away. They have form at their fingertips, and you cannot tell them much about horses that they do not find out for themselves. Interest in racing has increased a thousand-fold. Whereas betting on horse-racing was to a great extent formerly confined to those who attended the meetings, people now wager who have never seen a race-horse in their lives. Their whole knowledge has been acquired by what they have read, a study of the form book and the experience gained by backing horses at starting price.

Thousands of backers would, I am sure, indulge

in ante-post wagers on practically all the big events if a reliable market could be found, the prices to appear in the daily Press. There is a great fascination about bringing off a long shot, and the small amount risked does not hurt anybody.

Of course, if I were asked to give advice that was vital to the person demanding it, I should say : " Don't bet at all." But who would take it ? Which reminds me of something my doctor said to me one day.

" You'd better give up smoking cigarettes," was his edict for curing a cough I had acquired.

When I was about to leave his surgery he started coughing violently himself.

" You have a touch of it, too," I observed.

" Yes," said he, " it's those wretched cigarettes ! "

Betting may be just as harmful to some people as smoking or drinking is to others, but if you are a believer in moderation in all things, it won't land you in a pickle. It is only when you go off the " deep end " that the piper has to be paid.

Here are a few hints that may be found useful to those who dabble in units on the Totalisator.

In the first place, when you see by the indicator that a horse is being heavily backed, you will be well advised not to fall over yourself to get " on." The price is regulated by the amount of money received when the betting stops, and as you cannot beat the market, you might just as well wait and see what other horses are backed. It often happens that a run on a certain horse stops suddenly, and others are backed. You now have a chance for matured reflection.

By this I don't mean that you should defer making your wager until the last moment. If you do it is long odds that you won't get on at all if there are queues at all the ticket windows. When you have a fancy for a horse that looks like being an outsider, take your ticket at once. You can then watch how the " Tote " figures are fluctuating, and, if you still fancy your outsider, there is nothing to prevent you taking further tickets for it.

Hot favourites on the "Tote" should generally be avoided, but if they are not backed a lot for places it sometimes happens that the dividend is higher than a fourth of the odds.

Don't be misled into trying to find a sensational outsider. These are merely a fine advertisement for the "Tote." The best time to judge what the dividend is going to be is about five or six minutes before the "off," because then most of the big money has been invested. Some of the starting price offices may be utilising the "Tote," and this money will come at the last moment from the "Blower."

The best horses to back on the "Tote" are what I might term the 7 and 8 to 1 chances. These are the horses that the average bookmaker will be offering at about two points under these odds. If you happen to know that a horse is quietly fancied it will be advisable to chance a few tickets on it. Always back it each way.

When dabbling in the "Tote Daily Double" don't go for a "hot pot" as the first "leg." The time to go for the "hot pot" is the second "leg," when your first horse has come home at the s.p. of 6 or 8 to 1.

And here's my final hint—the most important of the lot: Bookmakers are often human, and most of them are essentially honest to their clients. Have you ever lost your ticket and been paid out? I know many backers who have. If you lose your "Tote" ticket you will get "nowt," for the machine, like a bank, only pays "on sight." You cannot draw anything on a lost ticket, even if you have memorised the number. That's flat!

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CHAPTER XXXII

“ GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS ”

THE atmosphere of the racing Press-box to-day is different to what it was when I first went out regularly to “ do ” the meetings. Newcomers in those days were not welcome. They had to take a back seat and keep as quiet as mice if they did not want to be cold-shouldered by the “ lords of creation ” who wrote for the principal sporting papers. All this was altered when the daily newspapers entered the field to compete for the privilege of reporting racing news in a way that would interest the “ man in the street.”

With few exceptions most of the racing reporters of thirty odd years ago were mere news-gatherers ; they could not write as racing reporters have to write nowadays, in a bright, chatty style, their “ copy ” being interpolated with little human interest stories of the race-course, and happenings which would not have been reported in the old days. I say nothing about those old-timers’ knowledge of racing—it was superb. Their trouble was that they could not put their thoughts down on paper, the probable reason being that they were never asked to do so by their editors, who merely wanted the bare details of running, and the latest betting news.

An old-time sports reporter on the staff of the *Sportsman* was instructed one day by his editor to write half a column of descriptive matter on the funeral of a well-known knuckle fighter. He attended the funeral, and came back to the office to write his “ copy.” For some minutes he was stuck for an opening sentence, then, after much thought, he wrote this :

“The corpse left its late house at Hampstead accompanied by its relatives and friends.”

Needless to say, the immortal phrase did not pass the sub-editor, who had to prepare the report for press.

One of my friends in the Press-box was the late Martin Cobbett, “Geraint” of the *Referee*. He and his brother Jack were two of the most brilliant men who did the round of the meetings. Charles F. T. Greenwood (“Hotspur” of the *Daily Telegraph*), when at his zenith, was a bit before my time, but I recollect having him pointed out to me one day at Hurst Park. Charlie Greenwood was one of the most able describers of a race who ever stood on Newmarket Heath. He had a vigorous style of writing, and his descriptions of the scenes on a big day were admirable.

Martin Cobbett was a beautiful writer; he was more than a racing journalist, for his articles on the countryside, his pen-pictures of birds, beasts and fishes, which he took great delight in stalking to their lairs, have never been surpassed. Also he was a great student of human nature; he wrote about people in all walks of life, and was never cruel in his criticisms, though there were times when he made straight-from-the-shoulder comments on matters of public interest in the various papers to which he contributed.

His son Jack was one of my boyhood friends, and I often visited Martin’s house at East Molesey, where he was loved by all and sundry. I think Martin Cobbett’s success as a sports writer was due to the fact that he was able to discourse on subjects in a way that appealed to all classes. He died in harness, the immediate cause of his death being a chill caught on the Blandford Road, near Salisbury, one chilly spring afternoon when he stopped to lend aid to a farmer who had met with an accident in a pony trap.

I suppose Alec Webster is one of the oldest members of the Press-box still doing the meetings, for it is not often now that I see A. McCarthy, who was formerly

"Robin Goodfellow" of the *Daily Mail*. "Mac" has retired to his garden near Richmond. Mr. Webster these times has more liking for golf than racing, but he attends all the principal meetings in his capacity of proprietor of several sporting papers, and his opinion on matters appertaining to racing is always very welcome to yours truly. John C. Boys, proprietor of that informative journal, the *Racing Specialist*, which he started as a small sheet under the title of the "Yellow Card," is another old member of the "box."

Whenever it so chances that I am watching a race next to Captain Brown ("Pegasus" of the *News of the World*), we start some discussion as to whether the horses of the present time or the jockeys of the present time are as good as the old 'uns, and many memories are conjured up. "Pegasus" can give most of us in the Press-box a start and a beating when it comes to talking about how many Derbies we have witnessed.

Meyrick Good, of the *Sporting Life*, I first met when I was his opponent in one of the Press billiards handicaps at Thurston's many years ago. He beat me. I have forgiven him, and never remind him that he had a lot of luck with the run of the balls that night. I have played cricket with him, and golf. Most of the members of the racing Press play golf—it keeps them from worrying about their losses on the playful "gee-gees." Meyrick is the oldest member of the paper he represents so ably, and I regard him as just about the most knowledgeable man in the "box," for he knows everybody worth knowing on the Turf, and has a rare nose for digging out racing news.

Sydney Galtrey, who has been "Hotspur" of the *Daily Telegraph* since 1912, is also "Rapier" of the *Sporting and Dramatic News*. He is a good judge of a horse, a most interesting writer, with a style of his own that others would find hard to copy, and a member of most of the racing clubs. When I look at his many gold badges I get envious. Captain Galtrey, like Meyrick Good, has dabbled as an owner of thoroughbreds, but, being a wise man, he does not intend to

lose on the swings what he makes on the roundabouts. Friend Meyrick is of the same opinion.

The signature of the racing writer of the *Morning Post* is "Watchman." Now, "Watchman" is Arthur Coaten in private life. Here is another authority on the race-horse, and the author of several books dealing with the Turf. He has the traditions of the *Morning Post* to keep up, and does it exceeding well. Captain "Bob" Lyle of *The Times* you have heard on the wireless. He frequently broadcasts the descriptions of important events. He is by no means a "Thunderer" by nature, but withal a charming chap. He also has a penchant for golf. After the fashion of other racing journalists he lives in the Thames Valley.

One of my best friends for many years in the racing Press-box has been Cyril Luckman, "The Scout" of the *Daily Express*. Somehow or other I have followed in Cyril's footsteps. I took over the features "Vigilant" and "The Wizard" in the now defunct *Sporting Times* when he gave up writing for the *Pink 'Un*, and I was very proud to do so, more especially as my father had been a frequent contributor to the paper in the lang syne. Cyril Luckman, in the course of a year's output of work, must write more words than any other popular racing critic, for I see columns from his pen in his paper on big days. He has the knack of putting over the right stuff for his public, which is an art in itself. He has acquired his profound knowledge of the sport he loves in many countries. His father was the original "Scout" of the *Daily Express*, when Sir Arthur Pearson founded the paper.

"Dicky" Bird, "The Picquet" of the *News Chronicle*, has had a lengthy experience of racing. He was once an amateur rider. He had a bad fall at Leicester over one of the drop jumps, and I fancy I am right in saying that he rode in Ireland. At any rate the "Emerald Isle" is his favourite venue when an important race such as the Irish Derby is on. His knowledge of Irish horses makes him a handy "book of reference" when anybody in the "box" wants accurate

information on matters of current interest appertaining to men and things "across the channel."

Jimmy Park ("Ajax" of the *Evening Standard*) is reputed to be the highest paid man on the racing Press. If he is, all I can say is that I am sure he earns every penny. Jimmy, when he came from the *Sporting Chronicle*, brought south a vast experience of northern racing. He is very popular with all with whom he comes into contact, and is regarded as a sound judge of racing and race form. To this knowledge he brings a happy style of writing and an aptitude for smelling out news, which is one of the attributes of most journalists who received the groundwork of their education north of the Trent.

"Templegate" of the *Daily Herald* who answers to the name of Harry Taylor, is better known as "Sinbad." That's easy: All Taylors, or tailors are "Sinbads." I have known Harry for more years than I care to remember, and when we meet, which is of frequent occurrence, we start yarning about the past. Harry's first racing experiences date back to the old race-course at New Barns, where he went with his father when they lived at Manchester. He is a good tipster as tipsters go, a sound writer, and a right down good fellow. The only thing against him is that when we go to Leicester he stands me oyster suppers. But that is another story.

George Whitehouse ("Captain Coe" of the *London Star*), has been principal racing writer of that paper for donkey's years. You would think on first meeting George that he is of a dour nature, but when you know him as I do, his great sense of humour manifests itself. The stay-at-home punter regards "Captain Coe," and rightfully so, as his Bible. In other words, what George says goes. Of all the men I know on the sporting Press he works as hard as any. He is at the office soon after 7 a.m., even when he is going to report the racing at one of the "park" meetings, and he thinks it no hardship to have to return to the office to see if everything is O.K. for the next morning's

"Fourth Edition." In order that time shall not hang on his hands in the evening he will occasionally take home a book of sporting reminiscences and do a column review of it for the next day's paper.

Another "George" I know intimately is George Kreiner, "Bouverie" of the *Daily Mirror*. He started as office boy on the *Mirror* in the days of the then Sir Alfred Harmsworth, and worked up to his present position. When Percy Moss was sports editor of the *Daily Mirror*, Kreiner was his right-hand man, and he holds the position of racing editor with the present sports editor T. B. D. Horniblow. I have heard it said that George is the *Mirror*, and I can well believe it, for he has worked under several editors, including Mr. H. Hamilton Fyfe, Mr. Kenealy and Mr. Campbell. As a judge of a handicap George wants some beating.

"Jack" Dickinson ("Captain Heath" of the *News Chronicle*) is one of the youngest members of the racing Press. He holds that distinction jointly with Frank Johnstone, that bright sports writer on the *Jockey* and *Leader*. Unlike Frank Johnstone, however, "Jack" Dickinson has not yet to my knowledge tried his hand at writing a racing novel. He gives a lot of winners, and has a fluent pen for touching on matters of current interest in the racing world.

The three Brothers Abrahams, Arthur, Lew and Dick, learnt their calling from their father, Arthur Abrahams, who died at a ripe old age. Abrahams senior was one of the most respected members of the racing Press. Lew is "Kettledrum," principal racing writer on the *Sporting Chronicle*, Dick is "Beaufort" of the London *Evening News*, and Arthur, who used to be on the *Morning Advertiser*, writes paragraph stuff for various newspapers.

When I want to know anything about breeding I immediately put a question to Professor Robertson, "Mankato" of the *Sporting Chronicle*. The Professor is the leading authority on bloodstock pedigrees and breeding, and since William Allison died in 1925 there

has been no real runner-up to Professor Robertson. What he does not know about his own pet subject is not worth knowing, and that is the long and short of it.

Next to the Professor I am inclined to hand out the whole baker's shop to my good friend Adair Dighton. "The Special Commissioner" of the *Sporting Life*. It was Dighton who took William Allison's place on the *Life*, after a varied experience of coursing and racing in the north, south and west of England. Adair Dighton has the degree of F.R.C.S. He qualified as a surgeon before the war and, because he found the life genial, forsook the scalpel for the pen, so what the medical profession lost the racing Press gained. Ask anybody round the Newmarket studs, or indeed any old stud farm in the country, if they know Dighton, and you will surely get a good account of him. You can sometimes find his car near Six Mile Bottom when the races are on at Newmarket. He has stopped to inquire the way.

Captain Eric Rickman ("Robin Goodfellow" of the *Daily Mail*) came to that newspaper from the *Evening Standard* after the war. He had a big job to hold down, following as he did McCarthy and Mellish, but he made good from the start. His daily articles on racing and racing folk are read and appreciated for their intrinsic value by millions of readers.

Eric Rickman's successor on the *Evening Standard* was Tommy Webster, not to be confused with the *Mail's* cartoonist of that name. Tommy Webster is still doing the "job of work," which means that he hit the nail right on the head when he took over. Tommy comes from Manchester, where the good journalists grow. I "grew" there myself!

Walter Meeds and "Jackie" Taylor are both on the *Life*. Walter returns the starting-prices at all the principal meetings, so is one of the "key" men in the racing game. He is a fine judge of running on the cinder track, and his annual articles on the Powderhall Handicap at Edinburgh attract a good deal of attention.

Walter comes from Sheffield, which is not far from Manchester as the crow flies.

"Jackie" Taylor shares the responsibilities of being a "Man on the Spot" with Meyrick Good. He does most of the northern meetings, and is a sound judge of racing.

Sam Long (I beg his pardon—Captain Sam Long) is "Augur" of the *Life*. He was formerly that paper's Newmarket Correspondent until Willie Standring went to headquarters and gave up writing the "Augur" article. Willie has forgotten more about racing than most folk will ever know, but the quieter life at Newmarket suits him better than running about all over the country. Hence the editor of the *Life*, Captain Chris Towler, made a happy choice when he secured Sam Long to carry on the good work.

Curiously there are two more former "Augurs" in the "box" to-day—Arthur Graham and Fred ("Buddy") Parsons. Graham is one of the "star" "course men" of the Press Association, while Parsons works on the *Life's* Weekly Edition.

There is no better-known man inside or outside the racing Press-box than Harry Humphries. Harry is a director of the Press Association, and is familiarly called the "father of the racing Press." He is always there in times of need to help journalists with advice and information. If a Pressman wants to know anything he asks Harry, and if Harry cannot tell him nobody else can. Harry Humphries' ordinary work consists in collecting runners and riders for the next day's racing, but there are hundreds of other things he does for the comfort and well-being of newspaper reporters.

Geoffrey Gilbey is one of the few writers on racing who have no pen-name. He writes as "Geoffrey Gilbey" in the *Daily* and *Sunday Express*. He also owns horses, and launched out "among the ponies" at Northolt. Gilbey is, perhaps, the most sincere racing writer I know. He always writes exactly what he feels, and, though he may occasionally give offence,

I am sure if he did not believe he was right he would not put it on paper, which, I think, is the finest tribute I can pay him.

George Norman (*P.A.*), Bob Jewitt (son of the trainer of Isinglass), Jack Topham ("Tops"), Albert Thompson ("The Duke"), Frank Harvey (who for several years has contributed the "Keystone" article to the *Sunday Dispatch*), Arthur Williams (Whitehouse's right-hand man on the *Star*), Jimmy Cox (the "Form King" of the *Life*), Roger Cardew ("Dalrymple" of the *Mail*, and a great man among the "longtails"), E. A. Bland (who writes about rowing as well as racing), Pegg ("Peggy") (who so ably does the "Gimcrack" stuff in the *Daily Sketch*), Claude Harrison (another Manchester lad), Bill Hobbiss (a wonderful judge of a handicap), Ted Dawson (who returns the prices in conjunction with Meeds), Fred Pilling, Ernie Curiton, A. Portman, who is "Audax," and G. Bamber (*Sunday Sportsman*) will all be found at some time or other in the Press-room. A race meeting would not seem the same without them, for they go to make up as jolly a set of fellows as you could want to meet. Some of them do not get all the credit they deserve for the solid work they do. Going racing may sound an easy task, but it is no sinecure when an east wind is blowing, or when rain and fog mars the view down the course. At the big meetings such as Ascot, Epsom, Doncaster, Goodwood and Liverpool a Pressman has to have all his wits about him if he is to get the news through in time and hold down his job.

In the Press-box as the northern meetings are many men I know by sight if not by name. Fred Turner and Joe Thwaites are both great lads, and, while I think of it, I had nearly forgotten to mention my good friend and excellent colleague, A. F. Wilson, that keen form student on the *Racing Specialist*.

Apart from the regular racing writers there are many who come into the "box" at odd times. Hannen Swaffer wants a Derby story for the news pages of the *Herald*, so we see him, *avec* cigar, in the front row,

thinking out a new complexion on racing as a sport for the masses. Margaret Lane occasionally turns up at Ascot and Goodwood to "do" the meetings from a woman's point of view; Captain Towler of the *Life*, as behoves the editor of a premier sporting paper, is frequently among his staff in the "box," keeping an eye on the way things go; Harry Ainsworth, editor of the *People*, is not a keen racing man by any means, but I have seen him at the Derby. He has no need to go out regularly, for, when I want looking after, Cecil Hadley, the sports editor of the *People*, makes himself my mentor. Cecil was racing years ago on the *Star*, but now he would sooner accompany Fred Ward ("Corinthian" of the *Herald*) and Captain Charles Packford, who writes about rugby, lawn-tennis, billiards, golf, athletics and goodness knows how many other sports, to Molesey Hurst golf-course, where I am sure they must be the bane of Bob Herd's existence.

A sports editor as a rule doesn't go out racing unless he also happens to be the racing writer of his paper. Why I don't know. It cannot be because he doubts the selling value of the sport to his paper. Sports editors go to other sports—boxing, football, athletics, and I have even seen them at swimming matches. Somehow or other they taboo racing.

Cecil Hadley has always affirmed that there are only two sports that sell newspapers. Racing is one, football ("Soccer") the other. When the "Aussies" are over here people buy papers to read about cricket; in the ordinary way they don't. You cannot sell more papers with tennis, you cannot sell more papers by giving special reports on rowing, bowls or hockey. The public like to read about every sport in creation, but they will not buy papers specially for these particular sports and pastimes.

I think the sports editor who realises this will be doing a service not only to his paper but to his own sense of proportion.

CHAPTER THE LAST

HOW TO MAKE MONEY AT RACING

THERE are no real set rules for making money on the Turf. If you say there are, I am going to disagree, but not in a dogmatic sense. A very old racing friend of mine, whose opinion I value, tells me that I cannot consistently back winners unless I spend a great deal of time delving into the book of form, and noting with a discerning eye everything that transpires during the course of a race, day in and day out. It is only to some extent that I agree.

It usually takes me longer to compile my weekly selections than it does to write a two thousand words article and half to three-quarters of a column of small paragraphs. There have been occasions, however when I have done the selections in half an hour, and been thoroughly satisfied with the job. Later on in the week my satisfaction has been justified by results. So you see, time and labour does not guarantee success.

One punter might scan through a dozen or more entries, and pick out the winner first "pop." If you asked him to give you concrete reasons why he chose this particular horse he would be flummoxed. Another punter might conclusively prove by study, knowledge and sound reasoning that the horse he picks has 10 lbs. in hand of any of its opponents on collateral running, and is, moreover, suited by the distance and the state of the going. He can also know that his fancy is being backed for the right money, and—it will finish among the "also rans," while "Mr. Chance-it's" selection rolls home by four lengths.

That is why I never tire of saying that luck is the predominating factor in racing.

Another friend of mine, who is an excellent judge of the points of a horse, won't risk a penny piece on an animal that does not appeal to him on looks. He is always talking to me about horses being "propped up a bit in front," "carrying too much barrel" "looking a bit leggy" or "lacking the bloodlike head" of some other horse he will name. When something takes his eye he will say :

"Basil Jarvis has coaxed some muscle on his frame since last year," or "That's a thick-set, low, level youngster, with a nice turn of speed, I'll be bound."

It is all very well for an expert to rattle off in this way, and I love listening to him and occasionally joining in the conversation, but the trouble is that with all his knowledge my friend gives away to the bookmakers nearly as much money as he earns from a business that ought to enable him to retire from active work before he reaches middle age.

If I had to draft out a book of rules for backers I should do it somewhat in this way :

1. Note what a placed horse has beaten ; not the animals that beat him.

2. Pay special attention to the horses of trainers who regularly win on certain courses, i.e. C. Waugh at Lingfield, Templeman at Bath.

3. If an owner has local associations he will be extra keen to win on his "home" track ; hence the horses he runs there will be specially keyed up.

4. Jockeys such as Michael Beary, Gordon Richards and Steve Donoghue (all quick beginners) generally win at Epsom, Brighton, Chester and Warwick.

5. Frank Hartigan is a good trainer to follow at the start of a season, and at the end, but not all the year.

6. Recent form is always better than old form, for you can get "on" a horse before it is re-handicapped.

After these six "do's" and "don'ts" I might add this :

7. If you are following a horse, do it systematically.

In other words, avoid having a small stake on when it wins and a large one when it loses.

8. Don't accept advice from anyone unless you think they are sure of their facts. (This principally applies to course backers who so often get "put off" their "fancies.")

9. Study the market at all times. If a horse is returned at 9 to 1 it is more safe to assume that somebody connected with the stable backed it than if it were returned at "10 to 1 others."

10. Collateral running is not worth much consideration.

11. Don't back a horse to win a mile race because it was leading at this distance when contesting a longer race. Races of different distances are always run at different speeds.

12. Horses that win on right-hand courses (or vice versa) should be backed to win again when conditions are similar.

I could go on a bit more, I suppose, but I am sure the best advice to tender to every inexperienced backer is : "Use common sense." Never bet more than your means or you will assuredly get out of your depth. Whenever you are having a bad time turn up betting for a while. You will come back to the game fresh and keen, and your chances of beating the bookmaker must increase rather than diminish.

All professional backers who manage to carry on year after year adopt "safety-first" methods. They don't plunge when they are out of luck. The time to plunge is when you are winning, for you are plunging with the bookmaker's money.

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